

Arthurian Personal Names in Medieval Welsh Poetry

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Summary

The aim of this work is to provide an extensive survey of the Arthurian personal names in the works of *Beirdd y Tywysogion* (the Poets of the Princes) and *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* (the Poets of the Nobility) from c.1100 to c.1525. This work explores how the images of Arthur and other Arthurian characters (Gwenhwyfar, Llachau, Uthr, Eigr, Cai, Bedwyr, Gwalchmai, Melwas, Medrawd, Peredur, Owain, Luned, Geraint, Enid, and finally, Twrch Trwyth) depicted mainly in medieval Welsh prose tales are reflected in the works of poets during that period, traces their developments and changes over time, and, occasionally, has a peep into reminiscences of possible Arthurian tales that are now lost to us, so that readers will see the interaction between the two aspects of middle Welsh literary tradition.

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Bibliographical Abbreviations and Short Titles

ALMA	Roger Sherman Loomis et al., <i>Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages: A Collaborative History</i> (Oxford, 1959)
AMWL	Oliver J. Padel, <i>Arthur in Medieval Welsh Literature</i> (Cardiff, 2000)
AW	<i>The Arthur of the Welsh</i> , eds. A.O.H. Jarman, Rachel Bromwich and Brynley F. Roberts (Cardiff, 1991)
BBCS	<i>Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies</i>
BBGCC	<i>Blodeugerdd Barddas o Ganu Crefyddol Cynnar</i> , ed. Marged Haycock (Llandybie, 1994)
BD	<i>Brut Dingestow</i> , ed. Henry Lewis (Cardiff, 1942)
BR	<i>Breudwyt Ronabwy</i> , ed. Melville Richards (Cardiff, 1948)
CAL	<i>A Companion to Arthurian Literature</i> , ed. Helen Fulton (Malden, Mass. and Oxford, 2009)
CBT	<i>Cyfres Beirdd y Tywysogion</i> , 7 vols., general editor R. Geraint Gruffydd (Cardiff, 1991-6)
CDG	<i>Cerddi Dafydd ap Gwilym</i> , ed. Dafydd Johnston (Cardiff, 2010)
CWID	<i>Casgliad o Waith Ieuan Deulwyn</i> , ed. Ifor Williams (Bangor, 1909)
CMCS	<i>Cambridge/Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies</i>
CO	<i>Culhwch ac Olwen</i> , eds. Rachel Bromwich and D. Simon Evans (Cardiff, 1988; English version, 1992)
CT	<i>Cyfoeth y Testun: Ysgrifau ar Lenyddiaeth Gymraeg yr Oesoedd Canol</i> , eds. R. Iestyn Daniel et al. (Cardiff, 2003)
CYSDT	<i>Cywyddau Ymryson Syr Dafydd Trefor</i> , ed. Rhiannon Ifans (Aberystwyth, 2013)
<i>Darlun</i>	Janem Mary Williams, <i>Y Darlun o Arthur ym Mucheddau'r Saint ac yn Englynion Ymddiddan Arthur a'r Eryr</i> (MA thesis, University of Wales,

Aberystwyth, 1967)

- DGnet <<http://www.dafyddapgwilym.net>>, eds. Dafydd Johnston et al. (Swansea, 2007)
- EB *Englynion y Beddau / The Stanzas of the Graves*, ed. and trans. John K. Bollard (Llanrwst, 2015)
- EWSP *Early Welsh Saga Poetry: A Study and Edition of the Englynion*, ed. and trans. Jenny Rowland (Cambridge, 1990)
- GBDd *Gwaith Bleddyn Ddu*, ed. R. Iestyn Daniel (Aberystwyth, 1994)
- GC *Gwaith Casnodyn*, ed. R. Iestyn Daniel (Aberystwyth, 1999)
- GDC *Gwaith Dafydd y Coed a Beirdd Eraill o Lyfr Coch Hergest*, ed. R. Iestyn Daniel (Aberystwyth, 2002)
- GDE *Gwaith Dafydd ab Edmwnd*, ed. Thomas Parry (Bangor, 1914)
- GDEp *Gwaith Dafydd Epynt*, ed. Owen Thomas (Aberystwyth, 2002)
- GDGor *Gwaith Dafydd Gorlech*, ed. Erwain H. Rheinallt (Aberystwyth, 2007)
- GDID *Gwaith Deio ab Ieuan Du a Gwilym ab Ieuan Hen*, ed. A. Eleri Davies (Cardiff, 1992)
- GDLl *Gwaith Dafydd Llwyd o Fathafarn*, ed. W. Leslie Richards (Cardiff, 1964)
- GEO *Gwaith Einion Offeiriad a Dafydd Ddu o Hiraddug*, eds. R. Geraint Gruffydd and Rhiannon Ifans (Aberystwyth, 1997)
- Gereint* *Ystorya Gereint uab Erbin*, ed. R.L. Thomson (Dublin, 1997)
- GGDT *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Dafydd ap Tudur, Gwilym Ddu o Arfon, Trahaearn Brydydd Mawr ac Iorwerth Beli*, eds. N.G. Costigan (Bosco) et al. (Aberystwyth, 1995)
- GGGr *Gwaith Gruffudd Gryg*, eds. Barry J. Lewis and Eurig Salisbury (Aberystwyth, 2010)
- GGLl *Gwaith Gruffudd Llwyd a'r Llygliwiaid Eraill*, ed. Rhiannon Ifans (Aberystwyth, 2000)

- GGMDi *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd ap Dafydd, I, Canu i Deulu Penmynydd*, ed. Barry J. Lewis (Aberystwyth, 2003)
- GGMDiii *Gwaith Gruffudd ap Maredudd ap Dafydd, III, Canu Amrywiol*, ed. Ann Parry Owen (Aberystwyth, 2007)
- GGlnet <<http://www.gutorglyn.net>> eds. Ann Parry Owen et al. (Aberystwyth, 2012)
- GGrG *Gwaith Gronw Gyriog, Iorwerth ab y Cyriog, Mab Clochyddyn, Gruffudd ap Tudur Goch ac Ithel Ddu*, eds. Rhiannon Ifans et al. (Aberystwyth, 1997)
- GHCil *Gwaith Hywel Cilan*, ed. Islwyn Jones (Cardiff, 1963)
- GHCLI *Gwaith Huw Cae Llwyd ac Eraill*, ed. Leslie Harris (Cardiff, 1953)
- GHD *Gwaith Hywel Dafï, 2 vols.*, ed. A. Cynfael Lake (Aberystwyth, 2015)
- GHS *Gwaith Hywel Swrdwal a'i Deulu*, ed. Dylan Foster Evans (Aberystwyth, 2000)
- GIBH *Gwaith Ieuan Brydydd Hir*, ed. M. Paul Bryant-Quinn (Aberystwyth, 2000)
- GIF *Gwaith Iorwerth Fynglwyd*, eds. Howell Ll. Jones and E. I. Rowlands (Cardiff, 1975)
- GIG *Gwaith Iolo Goch*, ed. Dafydd Johnston (Cardiff, 1988)
- GIGe *Gwaith Ieuan Gethin*, ed. Ann Parry Owen (Aberystwyth, 2013)
- GILIF *Gwaith Ieuan ap Llywelyn Fychan, Ieuan Llwyd Brydydd a Lewys Aled*, ed. M. Paul Bryant-Quinn (Aberystwyth, 2003)
- GIRh *Gwaith Ieuan ap Rhydderch*, ed. R. Iestyn Daniel (Aberystwyth, 2003)
- GLDar *Gwaith Lewys Daron*, ed. A. Cynfael Lake (Cardiff, 1994)
- GLGC *Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi*, ed. Dafydd Johnston (Cardiff, 1995)
- GLM *Gwaith Lewys Môn*, ed. Eurys I. Rowlands (Cardiff, 1975)

- GLI *Gwaith Llawdden*, ed. R. Iestyn Daniel (Aberystwyth, 2006)
- GLIBH *Gwaith Llywelyn Brydydd Hoddnant, Dafydd ap Gwilym, Hillyn ac Eraill*, eds. Ann Parry Owen and Dylan Foster Evans (Aberystwyth, 1996)
- GLIGMH *Gwaith Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig Hen*, ed. Dafydd Johnston (Aberystwyth, 1998)
- GMB *Gwaith Madog Benfras ac Eraill o Feirdd y Bedwaredd Ganrif ar Ddeg*, ed. Barry J. Lewis (Aberystwyth, 2007)
- GMRh *Gwaith Maredudd ap Rhys a'i Gyfoedion*, ed. Enid Roberts (Aberystwyth, 2000)
- GOLIM *Gwaith Owain ap Llywelyn ab y Moel*, ed. Eurys Rolant (Cardiff, 1984)
- GPB *Gwaith Prydydd Breuan, Rhys ap Dafydd ab Einion, Hywel Ystorm, a Cherddi Dychan Dienw o Lyfr Coch Hergest*, ed. Huw Meirion Edwards (Aberystwyth, 2000)
- GPC¹ *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, 1st edn.
- GRhB *Gwaith Rhys Brydydd a Rhisiart ap Rhys*, eds. John Morgan Williams and Eurys I. Rowlands (Cardiff, 1976)
- GSC *Gwaith Dafydd Bach ap Madog Wladaidd 'Sypyn Cyfeiliog' a Llywelyn ab y Moel*, ed. R. Iestyn Daniel (Aberystwyth, 1998)
- GSDT *Gwaith Syr Dafydd Trefor*, ed. Rhiannon Ifans (Aberystwyth, 2005)
- GSPE *Gwaith Syr Phylib Emlyn, Syr Lewys Meudwy a Mastr Harri ap Hywel*, ed. M. Paul Bryant-Quinn (Aberystwyth, 2001)
- GSRh *Gwaith Sefnyn, Rhisierdyn, Gruffudd Fychan ap Gruffudd ab Ednyfed a Llywarch Bentwrch*, eds. Nerys Ann Jones and erwain Haf Rheinallt (Aberystwyth, 1995)
- GTA *Gwaith Tudur Aled*, ed. T. Gwynn Jones (Cardiff, 1926)
- GTP *Gwaith Tudur Penllyn ac Ieuan ap Tudur Penllyn*, ed. Thomas Roberts (Cardiff, 1958)
- GW Chris Grooms, *The Giants of Wales* (Lewiston, 1993)

GWLii	<i>A Guide to Welsh Literature 1282-c.1550</i> , vol.2, ed. A.O.H. Jarman and Gwilym Rees Hughes, revised by Dafydd Johnston (Cardiff, 1997)
GYN	<i>Gwaith Y Nant</i> , ed. Huw Meirion Edwards (Aberystwyth, 2013)
HB	<i>Historia Brittonum</i>
HRB	<i>Historia Regum Britanniae</i>
IGE ²	<i>Cywyddau Iolo Goch ac Eraill</i> , eds. Henry Lewis, Ifor Williams and Thomas Roberts, new edn. (Cardiff, 1937)
LPBT	<i>Legendary Poems from the Book of Taliesin</i> , 2 nd revised edn., ed. and trans. Marged Haycock (Aberystwyth, 2015)
LIC	<i>Llên Cymru</i>
LIDC	<i>Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin</i> , ed. A.O.H. Jarman (Cardiff, 1982)
LIU	Dafydd Johnston, <i>Llên yr Uchelwyr</i> , 2 nd edn. (Cardiff, 2014)
Mab	<i>The Mabinogion</i> , ed. and trans. Sioned Davies (Oxford, 2007)
MWM	Daniel Huws, <i>Medieval Welsh Manuscripts</i> (Cardiff, 2000)
NCLW	<i>The New Companion to the Literature of Wales</i> , ed. Meic Stephens (Cardiff, 1998)
OPGO	<i>L'Œuvre Poétique de Gutun Owain</i> , ed. E. Bachellery (Paris, 1950-1)
Owein	<i>Owein, or Chwedyl Iarlles y Ffynnawn</i> , ed. R.L. Thomson (Dublin, 1968)
Peredur	<i>Historia Peredur vab Efrafc</i> , ed. Glenys W. Goetinck (Cardiff, 1976)
PWDN	<i>The Poetical Works of Dafydd Nanmor</i> , eds. Thomas Roberts and Ifor Williams (Cardiff and London, 1923)
SC	<i>Studia Celtica</i>
TYP ⁴	<i>Trioedd Ynys Prydein</i> , ed. Rachel Bromwich, 4 th edn. (Cardiff, 2014)
YSG	<i>Y Seint Greal</i>

Introduction

The aim of this study is to provide an extensive survey of the Arthurian personal names in the works of *Beirdd y Tywysogion* (the Poets of the Princes) and *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* (the Poets of the Nobility) from c.1100 to c.1525.¹ There is another pair of terms which roughly corresponds to the historical periods covered by *Beirdd y Tywysogion* and *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* and often used interchangeable with these two, namely, the *Gogynfeirdd* and the *Cywyddwyr*, yet their emphases are not the same. The terms 'Beirdd y Tywysogion' and 'Beirdd yr Uchelwyr' refer to poets who served the Welsh Princes before 1282 and noble patrons after that respectively, paying more attention to historical periodisation, whereas 'Gogynfeirdd' and 'Cywyddwyr' classify poets according to the principal style they used to compose poetry. Therefore, some poets who lived in the 14th century such as Casnodyn, Dafydd Ddu o Hiraddug and Gruffudd ap Maredudd ap Dafydd are regarded as *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* in one classification and *Gogynfeirdd* in the other.² For convenience of discussion the arrangement of sections in Chapters 2 and 3 is made by following the first pair of terms of categorisation.

This work explores how the images of Arthur and his companions that we obtain mainly from medieval Welsh prose tales are reflected in medieval Welsh

¹ Technically speaking, the period of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* extends into the early years of the 17th century, however, taking into consideration the historical fact that the medieval society began to fall apart throughout Europe in the wake of the emergence of the Renaissance spirit, and two events that brought enormous changes to Welsh society and culture, in other words, Henry VIII's reformation and the Acts of Union between 1536 and 1543, I see it better to hold the rein of my investigation by the end of the first quarter of the 16th century.

² For definition and discussion of the later *Gogynfeirdd* see for example D. Myrddin Lloyd, 'The Later Gogynfeirdd', *GWLi*, pp. 24-43.

poetry, traces their developments and changes over time, and, occasionally, has a peep into reminiscences of possible Arthurian tales that are now lost to us, so that readers will see the interaction between the two aspects of middle Welsh literary tradition.

The first question that anyone who wishes to discuss the Welsh Arthurian tradition comes up to is the influence of Geoffrey of Monmouth, since his pseudo-historical *Historia Regum Britanniae* was such a big success and brought so many changes to literary composition of Arthur and his retinue that it would be irresponsible to leave this issue unconsidered in any serious study of an Arthurian topic. For many years it has been conventional for discussions of Arthurian tradition (not only in dealing with Welsh materials but to a large extent for discussions of continental Arthurian texts as well) to adopt it as a landmark: the term ‘pre-Galfridian’ itself testifies his influence. I have not been able to track down who was the first to use the term, but it is unmistakable that the idea was already present in *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages* (1959), where Kenneth Jackson defined the word ‘early’ in his chapter ‘Arthur in Early Welsh Verse’, as ‘poetry of native Welsh tradition older than the time of Geoffrey of Monmouth; or, if not demonstrably older than the late twelfth or first half of the thirteenth century, evidently un-influenced by him.’³ By the time Patrick Sims-Williams set out to revisit and review the same topic in *The Arthur of the Welsh* (1991), scholarly opinions have grown more circumspect. Early Welsh poems that can reasonably be

³ ALMA, p. 12.

assigned a date before c.1150 are no longer taken as absolutely free from the influence of Geoffrey, yet the application of this year as a mark to distinguish two different phases in the development of Arthurian literature is retained with another justification, a support from linguistics, that 'c.1150 is also the approximate date for the demise of certain Old Welsh spelling conventions and Insular letter forms which appear to have been present in the exemplars of some poems, to judge by transcription errors'.⁴ Undoubtedly this division is useful in clarifying the scope of individual discussions that focus on works from a specific period, and needs a very careful examination in such studies.

My study, however, does not rely too much on this periodisation, because Geoffrey, the *Beirdd y Tywysogion* and the *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* in their respective times, as well as ourselves as contemporary readers, are facing the same vigorous tradition of Arthurian literature, although the concrete components and interests keep developing and changing all the time and we might regard ourselves as having more knowledge of its materials than they did. Geoffrey himself could not have divised his influence in the history of Arthurian literature. As for the Welsh poets to be discussed in this work, though the earliest extant text of their poems can be dated to c.1100 and the latest to c.1525, we have good reason to say that they did not see the changes in Arthurian literature as we do. Considering the continuity of Welsh Arthurian tradition, my study treats the texts which are generally regarded as of the pre-Galfridian period and those obviously or potentially under his influence as a

⁴ AW, pp. 35-6.

whole. Therefore, Welsh Arthurian sources including *Culhwch ac Olwen*, a number of poems in the Black Book of Carmarthen, *Preideu Annwfn* and other poems in the Book of Taliesin, the triads, the Three Welsh Romances and *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*, several Welsh saints' Lives, and other miscellaneous texts will be examined in due course without necessarily following a chronological order.

On the side of poetry, the works to be discussed are: 1) poems by *Beirdd y Tywysogion* composed from the beginning of the twelfth century to c.1285, which have been edited and published altogether in 7 volumes as the series *Cyfres Beirdd y Tywysogion*; 2) poems by *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*, with Bleddyn Ddu regarded as the earliest of them, up to c.1400, the year of the uprising of Owain Glyndŵr; and 3) poems by *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* in the 15th century and the first quarter of the 16th century, up to the generation of Tudur Aled. Most of the poems by *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* have been edited and published in the series *Cyfres Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*. For the small portion of poetry not contained in the series (most of them works by poets in the 15th and early 16th centuries), I use the latest edited modern editions. I am fully aware that the quality of some of these editions published during the earlier decades of the 20th century may not be completely satisfactory to the standard of 21st-century academics, yet since I am not confident enough at present to venture my own readings from the original manuscripts, I rely on those available published editions until new editions appear and replace them.

Dr Rachel Bromwich's monumental work *Trioedd Ynys Prydein* kindled the initial spark of the idea of this study. Not only is this book a full collation, faithful

translation and insightful research of early Welsh triads in its own right, but also with its extremely informative appendices of personal names, it has become a classic for research students and scholars in Celtic studies. Having been using it frequently as a handbook for my study in Arthurian literature in the Welsh tradition, I couldn't fail to notice that while relevant prose narrative sources are almost exhaustively listed under each entry of personal names, the references in poetry are selective. Rachel Bromwich writes as she mentions in a footnote with regard to the allusions of Arthurian personal names by the *Cywyddwyr*: 'I have made no attempt to give exhaustive references to all the occurrences of such names as *Arthur*, *Cai*, *Bedwyr*, *Gwalchmai*, *Rhydderch*, *Nudd*, etc.'⁵ In this regard my work is meant to be such an attempt and a further step in the direction her work opens, with the exception of unedited and unpublished manuscript sources between the 14th and the 16th centuries. At the same time, I hope that my study will draw some scholarly attention to the value of the poetical aspect in Welsh Arthurian tradition and evoke more future studies in this perspective.

Our knowledge of Arthurian literature in the medieval Welsh context is to a very large extent represented by prose narrative. Apart from a handful of poems, most of them collected in the Black Book of Carmarthen, the overwhelming majority of texts that comprises the corpus of early Welsh Arthurian texts is in prose, whether we think of *Culhwch ac Olwen*, of Geoffrey of Monmouth's medieval 'bestseller' *Historia Regum Britanniae*, known in Welsh as *Brut y Brenhinedd*, the three Welsh

⁵ TYP⁴, p. lvi, footnote 58. Italics original.

Arthurian ‘romances’,⁶ or of *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*, probably the most interesting Arthurian text in middle Welsh. The distribution of the contents of the chapters in *The Arthur of the Welsh*, by far the most comprehensive guidebook of Arthurian literature in medieval Welsh, reflects the same characteristic. These texts which have entered into the repertoire of medieval Welsh Arthurian literature share a kind of unity in theme and characters in spite of their diversity in form and genre. They all feature Arthur himself or some characters of his retinue. The adventures of Arthur and his men embody ‘the Welsh Arthurian world’ constructed by the content of their stories altogether.⁷

It is in this sense that we have our usual understanding of the word ‘Arthurian’, namely, as everything related to Arthur and members of his host, with a certain degree of narrative contained in it. This definition seems rather inclusive, yet if we use this criterion to search among all the works of *Beirdd y Tywysogion* and *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*, we would find no poem composed purposefully with an Arthurian theme. ‘Marwnad Owain Gwynedd’ by Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr,⁸ a long *awdl* with seven stanzas, mentions in the sixth stanza the names of Dillus son of Efrai (Dillus Barfog), Cynyr and his son Cai, indicating that the poet was familiar of the scene in *Culhwch ac Olwen* where Cai kills the giant Dillus Barfog, but that is not indicated in the poem, for in it these names are no more than direct parallels to

⁶ The definition of the term ‘romance’ in medieval Welsh literature is itself a topic that is worth a separate and detailed discussion, which is not within the scope of this current study, therefore I will leave it as it is in this work and use the term as the convenient name for *Peredur*, *Owein* and *Gereint* collectively.

⁷ Brynley Roberts, ‘*Culhwch ac Olwen*, the Triads, Saints’ Lives’, AW, p. 80. Personally I favour this expression very much, because it accurately conveys the unity on the level of narrative.

⁸ CBT IV.4.

Owain Gwynedd regarding physical power and strength. Therefore, it is Arthurian personal names and not Arthurian poems that is the object of this study, and by 'Arthurian personal names' is purported the main characters that appear in medieval Welsh texts which are taken to be Arthurian in the mind of a modern Welsh reader, namely, Gwenhwyfar, Llachau, Uthr, Eigr, Cai, Bedwyr, Gwalchmai, Melwas, Medrawd, Peredur, Owain, Luned, Geraint, Enid, and finally, Twrch Trwyth.

Readers might have noticed that I have left out an important character - the mighty magician Myrddin who according to Geoffrey of Monmouth used his magical power to help Uthr get hold of Eigr, and also the couple of tragic lovers - Trystan and Esyllt. My consideration goes with the point made by Brynley Roberts that the Welsh Arthurian world occupied a marginal place of medieval Welsh culture, and the person of Arthur himself, though not uniformly depicted as a hero, was magnetic enough to attract other originally independent narratives into his circle.⁹ Such was what happened to the characters of Trystan and Esyllt and Myrddin, among many other less prominent figures.¹⁰ Due to this process of integration the circumstances of these characters are more complicated than most of other Arthurian figures, thus a separate investigation is required; on the other hand, the fact that they were originally independent figures dragged into the Arthurian world at a later stage implies that the link between these characters and the Arthurian narrative is more external than other Arthurian characters, and thus the references to them is only

⁹ Brynley Roberts, '*Culhwch ac Olwen*, the Triads, Saints' Lives', AW, pp. 73-95.

¹⁰ For how they were absorbed into the Arthurian narrative field, see A. O. H. Jarman, 'The Merlin Legend and the Welsh Tradition of Prophecy', AW, pp. 117-46; and Rachel Bromwich, 'The *Tristan* of the Welsh', AW, pp. 209-28.

secondary concerning the focus of the current work. I do feel it proper and necessary, however, to investigate separately at a future time their portraits in the eyes of medieval Welsh poets.

Chapter 1: Possible Sources in Welsh and Latin for the References to Arthur in Medieval Welsh Poetry

The opinion that Arthurian legends have a Celtic origin had established itself at least nine centuries ago, by the time the concept of the ‘Matter of Britain’ was brought forward.¹¹ Among the Celtic countries Wales enjoys a particularly long history of Arthurian tradition. In spite of the evasiveness of earliest literary references to Arthur in Welsh, such as his name in *Y Gododdin*, it has long become a consensus that Arthur as a character in literature was ‘born’ in Wales.

The historicity of Arthur was for some time during the 20th century a hotspot of scholarly disputations. In the wake of the public attention in archaeology aroused by Schliemann’s discovery in the late 19th century of what he believed to be the city of Troy described in Homer’s *Illiad* and Virgil’s *Aeneid*, the relation between literature and history was re-thought. The idea that characters and events described in legends could have actually existed and happened in history triggered efforts to find evidence for the existence of Arthur as a real historical figure, which was the theme of two influential articles by Kenneth Jackson and Thomas Jones in the 1950s, except that they were not digging the ground with shovels and brushes but searching in all literary and historical texts that can possibly be dated to earlier than the time of

¹¹Old French Poet Jean Bodel was the first to classify the three ‘matters’. He mentions in his poem *Chanson de Saisne*:

*Ne sont que III matières à nul homme atendant,
De France et de Bretagne, et de Rome la grant.*

(There are but three matters that no man should be without,
That of France, of Britain, and of great Rome.)

Geoffrey of Monmouth, as Oliver Padel comments on the method they were using.¹²

What is more significant to me, however, is not the answer to the question ‘Was Arthur a real person?’ or ‘Did he exist?’ but why the question was brought forward. The general passion for archaeology and history during the first half of the 20th century certainly played a part in it, yet it seems to be more of an example in which the success of a character’s establishment in literature acts in reverse on the historical interest about that figure. In the face of the sheer volume of Arthurian legends across Europe over the centuries, we simply couldn’t help but wonder if there had never existed a real person called Arthur, why would there have been so many stories connected to this name, continually emerging over such a long period of time? My study does not propose to offer an answer to this question, because in my opinion once the name of a person becomes a legend, it enters into the domain of literature, where original historical attributes (if any) must give way to literary descriptions, and Arthur is one of the most typical and prominent figures in this regard.

Having said that this study does intend to look into the image of Arthur in the literary works available for medieval Welsh poets to use. It needs to be noted that the term ‘image’ here is used metaphorically, for as Bullock-Davies has pointed out in 1983,¹³ there is a stark absence of descriptions of Arthur’s physical characteristics in

¹² O. J. Padel, ‘The Nature of Arthur’, *CMCS* 27 (1994), 1-31. For Jackson’s article see K. H. Jackson, ‘The Arthur of History’, *ALMA*, pp. 1-11; for Jones’s article see Thomas Jones, ‘Datblygiadau Cynnar Chwedl Arthur’, *BBCS* 17 (1956-58), 235-52, English translation by Gerald Morgan as ‘The Early Evolution of the Legend of Arthur’, *Nottingham Mediaeval Studies* 8 (1964), 3-21.

¹³ Constance Bullock-Davies, ‘The Visual Image of Arthur’, *Reading Medieval Studies* 9 (1983), 98-109.

medieval Welsh Arthurian prose narratives.

It should not be understood, however, that descriptions in early Welsh Arthurian sources are not clear enough for us to have an idea of Arthur's personality. Indeed although Arthur may appear as a *faire-néant* king in some texts, he is by no means a 'flat character', to borrow E. M. Forster's term.¹⁴ In this chapter I will try to give a brief summary of what idea we could get of the kind of person Arthur is from these texts. They will be grouped according to their appearance in manuscripts rather than to the possible date of composition of the texts, mainly because it seems to be more suitable for the discussions in the current study, but also that it is a conventional and widely accepted way of discussing sources and materials in medieval European literature.

1.1. Arthur in the White Book of Rhydderch and the Red Book of Hergest

The prose tale collection known as the *Mabinogion* is by far our richest source of medieval Welsh prose narrative. According to contemporary consensus it contains eleven tales including the Four Branches of the *Mabinogi*, the Three Romances (*Peredur*, *Owein*, *Gereint*), *Lludd a Llefelys*, *Culhwch ac Olwen*, *Breuddwyd Macsen* and *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*. All but *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy* are preserved in both the White Book of Rhydderch and the Red Book of Hergest, and fragments of some of the tales are seen in several other manuscripts as well. Among these narratives, five

¹⁴ For definitions of 'round character' and 'flat character', see E. M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel* (London: E. Arnold, 1927).

are usually taken as Arthurian tales - *Culhwch ac Olwen*, the Three Romances and *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*.

1.1.1. *Culhwch ac Olwen*

Culhwch ac Olwen is acknowledged as the earliest Welsh prose tale that has come down to us. Idris Foster dated the composition of the written text to c.1100, and this date is followed by the majority of scholars since his time.¹⁵ Recently Simon Rodway reassesses the text according to its linguistic characteristics and dates it afresh to mid- to late-twelfth century.¹⁶ Even so it retains its status as the earliest known written source of native Welsh Arthurian narrative. With its excessively long and impressive name list, it can almost be regarded as an Arthurian encyclopaedia of native Arthurian tradition in Wales. Some of the names are apparently the author's own fabrication to amuse the audience, others not seen anywhere else and therefore we know nothing about them for certain, but quite a few do have echoes in the triads and the works of medieval Welsh poets.

The story of *Culhwch ac Olwen* has a clear episodic structure. Arthur is not present in the earlier part of the narrative; only his name is mentioned in the advice given to Culhwch by his father Cilydd. Apart from being Culhwch's cousin, Arthur is referred to as a man who has the means to solve any problem and obtain anything

¹⁵ Idris Llewelyn Foster, *Astudiaeth o Chwedl Culhwch ac Olwen*, unpublished MA dissertation (University of Wales, Bangor, 1935), pp. 248-305, and his chapter 'Culhwch and Olwen and Rhonabwy's Dream', in ALMA, pp. 31-43.

¹⁶ Simon Rodway, 'The Date and Authorship of *Culhwch ac Olwen*: A Reassessment', CMCS 49 (2005), 21-44.

in the world, even if the obstacles seem impossible to overcome, or the requirements seem impossible to fulfil, or, in Culhwch's circumstances, both. It looks as if Arthur's court existed especially as a final recourse for those who seek help with their extremely difficult tasks.

It happens to be the first day of January (*Calan Ionawr*) when Culhwch arrives at the gate of Arthur's court, and Glewlwyd Gafaelfawr is the one-day porter for that special event - the celebration of the New Year. Such are his words as he refuses entrance of Culhwch into the dining hall or the public part of the court (*neuadd*): 'Knife has gone into meat and drink into horn, and a thronging in the hall of Arthur. Apart from the son of the lawful king of a country, or a craftsman who brings his craft, none will be allowed to enter.'¹⁷ This suggests that Arthur's court is not a primitive chieftain's gathering place, but a proper building consisting of separated parts with different functions, and that strict but reasonable rules are applied to occasions of special events, suggesting that Arthur's management is conducted through a fairly developed legal system according to medieval standard.

As if to appease the anger of Culhwch though, yet actually introducing a tradition of Arthur's court, Glewlwyd Gafaelfawr said immediately after those words that there is lodging in another place in the court where Arthur offers every traveller high quality food and drink for themselves as well as for their dogs and horses, music to entertain them, and a woman for each one to sleep with. I think most of us would agree that if we remove the woman bit, and update the horse to a car, this kind

¹⁷ CO, ll. 89-92; Mab., p. 181.

of lodging could well make a five-star hotel of our own days. At any time, this kind of arrangement demonstrates an extraordinary degree of generosity of a host towards his guests.

Culhwch is not moved by this offer and threatens to defame Arthur and his court. At this time readers see that Glewlwyd Gafaelfawr is not as stiff as we might expect him to be from his earlier conversation with Culhwch. He goes into the hall to report the coming of Culhwch as something unusual to Arthur. From his narration we know that Arthur is a senior in that story, for he says ‘two thirds of my life have gone / and two thirds of your own’.¹⁸ Arthur decides to let Culhwch in at once upon hearing the report, and when Cai rises to object, reminding him of the law of the court, Arthur says the following words, which are often quoted as a proof of his concept of honour and nobility: ‘Not so, fair Cai. We are noblemen as long as others seek us out. The greater the gifts we bestow, the greater will be our nobility and our fame and our honour.’¹⁹

The scene when Culhwch enters into the court to meet Arthur gives a good account of Arthur’s bearings as well. Culhwch’s attitude is rather crude, although we could say that it is partly because he is not familiar with the rules of Arthur’s court and it seems that he is already doing his best to greet Arthur. Arthur’s response again proves his hospitality and generosity as well as tolerance of others’ behaviours that are not taken as civilised enough in the eyes of his host. Moreover, he does not fail to show his prudence when he was answering Culhwch’s request for booty. He says

¹⁸CO, l. 116; Mab., p. 182.

¹⁹CO, ll. 135-8, Mab., p. 183.

that Culhwch may ask for anything except his ship, mantle, sword, spear, shield, dagger, and, it looks very much like an afterthought here, he adds his wife Gwenhwyfar to this list.²⁰

Arthur (along with several members of his host, especially Cai and Bedwyr) is in fact the main characters from then on until the end of the story. Their adventures in helping Culhwch complete his tasks constitute the main thread of the plot of the tale.²¹ It is in this sense that we regard *Culhwch ac Olwen* as an Arthurian text. With all its purported archaic settings, Arthur's image reflected in the tale is one of a successful middle-aged medieval overlord with a team of efficient and loyal individuals not only capable of fighting battles but also good at dealing with the daily business of his court. Nevertheless, this portrayal of Arthur does not contain any imperial element, for he is referred to simply as Arthur all through the text and never as 'king' (*brenin*),²² in sharp contrast to the opening sentence of *Owein*, where he is called 'emperor' (*amherawdr*).²³

1.1.2. The Three Romances

The title *Three Romances* can be regarded as a convenient collective name for the three tales - *Peredur*, *Owein* and *Gereint*, which are in turn abbreviations for their respective longer titles. As maturely developed narratives each one of the three

²⁰ CO, ll. 155-62; Mab., p. 183.

²¹ See Appendix for the acting characters in the episodes of *Culhwch ac Olwen*.

²² Culhwch does address Arthur as 'chief of the kings/lords/leaders of this Island' (Penn Teyrned yr Ynys honn), and we may assume that the meaning of this title is similar to that of a king, but the context is not clear enough for us to make a conclusive statement. CO, ll. 142-3; Mab., p. 183.

²³ *Owein*, p. 1; Mab., p. 116.

has a protagonist, the hero of the story, after whom the tale is conveniently named, as well as distinctive features of their own.²⁴ The distinct correspondences in structure and wording perceived between the Three Romances and Chrétien de Troyes' *Erec*, *Yvain* and *Perceval* naturally evoked the question of the relationship of the two groups of texts, or briefly put as the *Mabinogionfrage*,²⁵ but to avoid digression from the main task of the current work I do not attempt to go deep into the discussion of the issue.²⁶ The main reason why they are discussed here as a group apart from following the convention is that the portrayals of Arthur in the three narratives show no substantial discrepancy between themselves, and, indeed, no disagreement with the one in *Culhwch ac Olwen* either.

It is worth noting that although Arthur plays no crucial part in any of the three narratives, his existence - and above all, his position as chief of a group of best men in the world - is pivotal to the narrative. The occasions on which Arthur appears in the three tales are few, yet every time when Arthur says or does something, it indicates a progression of the plot. Arthur's court is a hub for knights from every corner of the (Arthurian) world and young men seeking to become knights. In a

²⁴ For detailed discussions of the three narratives in general see corresponding chapters in AW and corresponding 'Introduction' sections in modern Welsh editions of the three texts.

²⁵ For the origin and a discussion of the term see J. Loth's article in *Revue Celtique* xiii (1892), 475-503.

²⁶ A very clear-minded and useful review has recently been provided by Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan. See her article 'Migrating Narratives: *Peredur*, *Owain*, and *Geraint*' in CAL, pp. 128-41. Her argument is generally convincing to me and the only point on which my view slightly differs from hers is that while she emphasises the influence from French sources through the communication of the two countries, I am more in favour of Glenys Goetinck's opinion that the tales were originally created and recited in an oral form, and that towards the end of the twelfth century they had been written down in manuscripts and Chrétien de Troyes had at least one of them by hand when he was composing his stories. Meanwhile, the tales continued to be recited in their original form in Wales. Later, when Chrétien's works became known in Wales, the Welsh made an attempt to unite the native forms and the new elements developed in French, thus it came to be what we see them in the White Book and the Red Book. For Goetinck's view see *Peredur*, p. xxiii.

sense it functions like a university where people receive cultivation (of knightly behaviour) along with practical training (of martial skills, presumably), and where people are more valued than the material condition of life, for even Arthur himself is happy with sleeping on ‘a pile of fresh rushes’²⁷ and when excellent knights like Owain have been away for some time, Arthur becomes sad and then sets out to seek for the person.

The opening section of *Owein* presents a very relaxed, almost private scene of Arthur’s daily life when there is nothing special to do. The king wants a nap while waiting for food to be served and suggests that his men could tell stories to each other to pass the time, and considerably tells Cai to bring mead and chops for the storyteller to enjoy. Cynon told his story first, Owain’s curiosity was stirred up by it, he slipped away immediately after the meal, and that was how everything began. It is clear that Arthur was the initiator of the whole narrative although he did not do much in the scene. Neither did he do much in the scene of the search and reunion with Owain, yet the few cameos of him speak of what kind of person he is. Cai asks to be the first to joust with the knight in black (Owain unrecognised) and Arthur gives his permission. This might be a minor thing but it shows Arthur’s respect for Cai. The reunion of Owain and Arthur has a very warm atmosphere which gives the feeling that Arthur is treating Owain more as an old friend than as one of his subjects. What happened next in Owain’s life can be summed up as the typical situation of dilemma where a married man has to balance his love for his wife and his friendship with his

²⁷ *Owein*, p. 11; Mab., p. 116.

old friends. We know that Owain stayed in Arthur's court for three years instead of the originally promised three months, and this caused the family problem, but it also suggests the attraction of Arthur's court, where individual knights are treated as equals to the king himself and esteemed for their achievements, though logically they are under his command. This image would again match a medieval nobleman better than it does with the concept of an emperor of the Roman style.

The portrayal of Arthur in *Peredur* is almost exactly the same as that in *Owein*, except that it focuses more on one aspect of his character - his judgment of how a decent knight should behave himself. Arthur only appears twice in this tale. In the first instance he blames Cai for his improper behaviour towards Peredur and in the second he approves Gwalchmai for his appropriate speech, followed by bad and good results that verify his judgments respectively.

Arthur is more active in *Gereint* compared with the other two stories. He decides to go hunting for a pure white stag that was reported to have been spotted in a forest that belongs to him. The nature of this decision is the same as the one at the beginning of *Owein*, that is, leisure and enjoyment of life, though hunting is obviously more exciting than sleeping. Again it becomes the first kick of the narrative in sequence, at least for the first episode of *Gereint*, for without the event Gwenhwyfar wouldn't have been late, Geraint wouldn't have been late, they wouldn't have encountered Edern ap Nudd and his dwarf and have been insulted, and there wouldn't have been revenge. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that both in the tale of *Owein* and here Arthur's role is more significant than it seems at first

sight.

In the same episode Arthur is also depicted as a caring and loving husband in his attitude towards Gwenhwyfar and a sympathetic lord to the wounded, even if the person had done wrong to members of his court. In later parts of the story, we see a very approachable Arthur, for he was very ready to co-operate with Gwalchmai in moving his pavilion nearer to the road in order for the latter to entice Geraint to the road to meet him, and after that he gently but firmly insists that Geraint stay with him until his wounds are healed by his physicians. This brief encounter looks incidental in itself, and the healing of the wound appears to be rather confusing,²⁸ however without this apparent healing there wouldn't be Geraint's wounds re-opening in his fight with the giant, his falling as if dead, Enid's scream and Geraint's revival, and consequently, his change of attitude towards Enid and the end of their aimless journey.

1.1.3. *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*

Breuddwyd Rhonabwy is the strangest tale in the *Mabinogion* collection. While obviously late regarding its date of composition and the tone of narrative compared to *Culhwch ac Olwen* and the Three Romances, the image of Arthur is not too far from what we see in those texts. Although with a satirical and humorous mood the events happen in a chaotic anachronism, Arthur is in the first instance still referred to

²⁸ As is expressed by Roger Middleton in his 'Chwedl Geraint ab Erbin' in AW, p. 152.

as a king who loves peace above war, as Iddog explains the origin of his nickname.²⁹

In the next scene in which Arthur appears he laughs disdainfully upon seeing Rhonabwy and his companions and Iddog asks why he laughed.

‘Iddog’, said Arthur, ‘I am not laughing; but rather I feel so sad that scum such as these are protecting this Island after such fine men that protected it in the past.’³⁰

The intention of parody is plain here, but this might also remind us of the disheartened Arthur in ‘Pa gur’ and ‘Preideu Annwfn’.

The descriptions of Arthur and Owain playing *gwyddbwyll* while their warriors and ravens attacking and killing each other and afterwards bards performing a poem that no-one understands except that it was meant to praise Arthur are too exemplary of irony to escape anyone's notice. Nearly all modern editors, translators and researchers have something to say about it. It is generally thought that the *gwyddbwyll* scene is the author showing his talent of humour and the poets scene a lampoon of the *Gogynfeirdd*.³¹

1.2. Arthur in the Triads

The Welsh triads have been of special interests for scholars in Arthurian literature since the publication of the first edition of Rachel Bromwich's *Triaded Ynys Prydein* in 1961. Scholarly references to the triads are more often than not in

²⁹ BR, 4.29-5.16; Mab., p. 216.

³⁰ BR, 6.27-7.3; Mab., p. 217.

³¹ See for example, BR, p. xlv, Mab., p. 225n.

passing in their own researches. However, it is only partially because Bromwich's work is so comprehensive on this topic that little is left to be done by others, but more because of the laconic style of the triads. Indeed although the Welsh triads are heavily Arthurian themed, little can we gather of the personality of Arthur himself from the triads. Triads are found in med. fol. 251-258 in the White Book of Rhydderch and in col. 588-600 in the Red Book of Hergest (TYP⁴ nos.47-69),³² but unlike in the case of the *Mabinogion* collection, they are not regarded as the sole important sources for the triads, because there are two main earlier manuscripts containing a larger part of the extant triads, namely, Peniarth 16 and Peniarth 45 (TYP⁴ nos.1-46), and two from later dates, Peniarth 47 and Peniarth 50 (TYP⁴ nos.70-80 and 81-86), as well as miscellaneous additions from later manuscripts (TYP⁴ nos.87-97).³³

Strictly speaking, the triads featuring Arthur himself are but a few: nos. 1, 2, 12, 20, 26, 37(R), 51, 52, and 54 in TYP⁴. Our information about Arthur is inevitably fragmentary, as is determined by the nature of the triads, yet from the fragmentary impression, we see that Arthur is not always so victorious and flawless. Triad 1 gives the territories and the location of his courts but not anything about his character. Triad 2 mentions Arthur as the most generous man on the Island of Britain. From triad 12 we know that he was an amateur or shoddy bard. Triad 20 makes Arthur one of the three 'Red Reapers/Despoilers/Ravagers' (*rhuddfoawg*), and the snapshot in triad 26 shows an unsuccessful attempt by Arthur to get hold of a pig from the herd

³² For a detailed list of the contents of the two manuscripts see Daniel Huws, 'Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch', CMCS 21 (1991), 4, and his 'Llyfr Coch Hergest' in CT, pp. 4-7.

³³ For a detailed description of the triad sources in the manuscripts see Bromwich, TYP⁴, pp. xvi-lii.

of swine under Trystan's keep. Triad 37 in the Red Book version describes Arthur as jealous of others' protective power, even it were beneficial to the Island of Britain. Triad 51 contains a long account (compared to the usual length of triads) of the battle of Camlan. Triad 52 tells us that Arthur was imprisoned three times, and each time it was Goreu son of Custennin who went to get him out. Finally, in triad 54 Arthur seemed to be deploying an-eye-for-an-eye policy towards Medrawd for his previous ravaging of Arthur's court and insult to Gwenhwyfar. In addition, from 'The Thirteen Treasures of the Island of Britain' we also know that he had a magical mantle which makes whoever is under it invisible but enables him/her to see everyone.³⁴

It is interesting to note that in triads nos. 2 and 52, and in the White Book and Red Book version of triad 20, the reference to Arthur is an attachment to the three names assembled in the triad because of a certain attribute they share, and unexceptionally with a higher degree of that attribute shown,³⁵ which may or may not indicate later addition in the process of composition. However, since this does not happen to Arthur's name alone and not in later manuscripts alone,³⁶ perhaps we should not pay too much attention to it. Triad 51 displays an Arthur more continental than in other triads, for it mentions Arthur's campaign on the continent. According to Bromwich, it was possibly composed shortly before 1400, around the time that the Middle English alliterative poem *Mort Arthure* appeared.³⁷

In a word, the Arthur of the triads is no doubt powerful, fierce in battles, which

³⁴ TYP⁴, App.III, p. 259. (Harry Potter is nothing new, not at all!)

³⁵ Rachel Bromwich pointed out the phenomenon in TYP⁴, p. 40.

³⁶ See, for example, triad no.21, where Bedwyr is the superior fourth character.

³⁷ TYP⁴, pp. 140-1.

have been his attributes since the very beginning of his appearance in literature, but on the other hand he is also described as over-proud, and he needs others' help when down in luck, and sometimes acts unwisely so as to irritate his important helpers.³⁸

1.3. Arthur in medieval Welsh Saints' Lives

In the note to triad 37R Bromwich comments that 'the conception of Arthur as a defender of his country from dangers both internal and external is entirely consistent with the manner of his portrayal in other early sources. These include *Culhwch*, the Saints' Lives and the early poetry.'³⁹ This triad, or half of a triad actually, lists the 'Three Unfortunate Disclosures' when the 'Three Fortunate Concealments' were revealed. As this half of the triad is only found in the Red Book of Hergest, it is reasonable to assume that it dates from not too long before c.1400. However, I tend to think that here the idea of Arthur as a powerful defender becomes subsidiary to the impression that he was showing too much pride in his own power, and that this side of Arthur's image was used in the Saints' Lives featuring Arthur.

Seven Welsh and Breton saints' Lives are usually considered to be related to Arthur, the Lives of Cadog, Carannog, Eflam, Gildas, Goueznou, Illtud and Padarn. They are all written in Latin originally. The influence of Geoffrey in these hagiographical works is disputable. Brynley Roberts regards all of them as

³⁸ If we look at triad 12 side by side with the episode in *Culhwch ac Olwen*.

³⁹ TYP⁴, p. 102.

pre-Galfridian except the Life of Illtud,⁴⁰ whereas Oliver Padel argues that although the original composition dates of the Lives are likely to be 1100-30, the manuscripts containing them are from later dates, thus we cannot exclude the possibility that the texts have undergone alteration before they were written down into the manuscripts.⁴¹ The foremost purpose of these Lives is, no doubt, to praise the saints and demonstrate the authority of the Church, or to use a less favourable expression, church propaganda. Therefore it is no wonder to see Arthur depicted negatively in several of these texts. In the Life of Padarn it is said that Arthur wanted Padarn's gorgeous robe for his own, and in the Life of Carannog he intended to take the mysterious altar sent to Carannog by Christ from heaven and use it as a table, and he was acting in the manner of a spoilt child.

In other saints' Lives Arthur is presented in a more neutral light. In two of the above mentioned hagiographies Arthur's role is literally kept to the minimum. The life of Illtud simply uses his name as a symbol of earthly wealth, and the Life of Goueznou narrates the events in a dry annalistic way, giving us only one piece of information, that Arthur was a mighty defender of the Island of Britain against the invasions of the Saxon. In others it is evident that orally transmitted local legends were amalgamated in the Lives to make them more convincing to the Welsh audience. The two Arthurian episodes in the Life of Gildas preserve the earliest complete record of the story of Huail ap Caw and the abduction of Gwenhwyfar by

⁴⁰ Brynley Roberts, 'Culhwch ac Olwen, the Triads, Saints' Lives', AW, p. 82.

⁴¹ AMWL, p. 38.

Melwas.⁴² It is interesting that neither Huail nor Melwas was mentioned in any of the poems by *Beirdd y Tywysogion*, but both names were favoured by *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* in their works from c.1350 onwards, and in most cases the *genre* of poems in which they appear is eulogy (*moliant*). Does this suggest that there was an experiment by the poets during the second half of the 14th century to incorporate more folklore materials into the composition of panegyric poems that had previously been considered as not suitable for this elevated genre of poetry?

It can be inferred that these saints' Lives were known to both *Beirdd y Tywysogion* and *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* presumably as part of their religious education, but there is no way to judge from their work how much of this hagiographical portrayal of Arthur had been accepted by the poets. Some of them might well be pious enough to believe every word from a clerical resource, others might have some doubt on the dogmatics of the Church, but their references to Arthur are unanimous in not giving any religious connection to Arthur as if they all agreed upon themselves to keep silence of this question, since, as Padel has noticed, Arthur's own religious stance cannot be clearly identified in any of these Arthurian episodes in the saints' Lives.⁴³ Indeed his image is unusually ambiguous in this regard. He appears as dragon-slayer, giant fighter (himself a giant probably), but that is not incompatible with the Christian doctrine, for even the Bible itself is full of strange monsters and wicked giants. He is not a pagan king hostile to Christianity at all; indeed he is quite willing to accept blessings from saints, when he sees it as beneficial to him and to

⁴² AW, p. 83.

⁴³ AMWL, p. 41.

his own ends. It is rather ironic that the intention of the authors of the hagiographies was to belittle Arthur or at least to use his great fame to praise and highlight the saints, yet their significance for academic research nowadays lies largely in being witness to Arthurian folk legends and being a testimony to the popularity of Arthur in the Middle Ages. As Janem Williams remarks, his popularity was so great in Wales by the 13th century that the clergymen thought the legends to be dangerous to the church if left to develop in their own way, therefore they thought it better to incorporate and use his character for their own purposes rather than simply ignoring it.⁴⁴

1.4. Arthur in the Black Book of Carmarthen

The Black Book of Carmarthen occupies a significant position as an early Arthurian sourcebook as it preserves most of the extant Welsh Arthurian poems in it. Some of them can be dated to pre-1100.⁴⁵ Though not exhibiting as much artistry as the poetry of *Beridd y Tywysogion* and *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*, these early poems do open a slot in the wall of silent history for us to obtain some (albeit rudimentary) idea of Arthur and several other characters connected to him.

It needs to be pointed out that the Black Book of Carmarthen was never meant to be an Arthurian collection, yet the scribe-cum-compiler seemed to be quite interested in folklore legends, for according to Jarman's classification 14 poems out

⁴⁴ *Darlun*, p. 170.

⁴⁵ *AW*, p. 38.

of 40 are legendary, which equals the number of religious poems in the Black Book, without counting those poems related to Myrddin. The other eight poems are seven eulogies and elegies by Cynddelw Brydydd mawr and one or two anonymous court poets, and *Breuddwyd a Welwn Neithiwr*, generally thought to be a series of traditional proverbs rendered in verse.⁴⁶ I agree completely with Daniel Huws that this manuscript is ‘a slowly built-up work of love’, that the compiler ‘was guided by personal taste, he was working for himself, with no clear preconceived idea of what his book would contain’, and that ‘the Black Book seems the likeliest to contain a substantial proportion of poems which might derive directly from oral tradition’.⁴⁷

Seven poems in the Black Book of Carmarthen are generally regarded as having some Arthurian connections. Only 'Pa gur yv y porthaur?', however, helps us build up some possible ideas about Arthur. 'Pa gur yv y porthaur?' is the longest piece of work in verse among early Arthurian materials that have come down to us. The poem catches the eye of almost every Arthurian researcher with its richness of potential behind-the-scene stories and peculiar style of narration. It has been analysed line by line by Patrick Sims-Williams,⁴⁸ and I do not attempt to repeat his work here. The only thing I would like to note here is that all interpretations so far about the narrative context of this poem are tentative, and although it is tempting to think that Arthur can be deciphered here as having suffered bad luck, having lost many of his men, low in morale, the picture formed in our mind is based on speculations about the context of this poem and therefore should not be taken as a fixed image of Arthur

⁴⁶ LLDC, pp. xxv-xxvi.

⁴⁷ MWM, pp. 71-2.

⁴⁸ AW, pp. 38-46.

in early Welsh Arthurian narrative.

1.5. Arthur in the Book of Taliesin

The poems in the Book of Taliesin which bear Arthurian links are *Preideu Annwfn*, *Kat Godeu*, and *Kadeir Teyrnnon*. Being an extraordinarily interesting collection of poems under the *persona* of Taliesin, it does not say much about Arthur himself. *Preideu Annwfn* tells of Arthur's expedition to the Otherworld, known by the name of Caer Siddi and a number of other names in the poem, to free Gwair from his imprisonment. According to the narrative, that journey to the Otherworld was a total disaster, with only seven returning alive among three full loads of Prydwen (Arthur's ship) of men who went with Arthur. The narrator is undoubtedly the figure of Taliesin, and this poem is more about Taliesin than about Arthur, as Marged Haycock points out,⁴⁹ and the one piece of information we could gather from this poem is that Arthur does not always prevail in everything - there are things that he cannot achieve.

The narrative of *Kat Godeu*, a poem that inspired Tolkien perhaps, seems to be a strange blend of native Welsh folklore and Christian belief. Taliesin boasts of being in many shapes and in many places, his supernatural experience and knowledge basically, and near the end of this long poem he calls: 'Derwydon, doethur, / darogenwch y Arthur!' (Sages, wise men, / prophesy Arthur!)⁵⁰ The meaning of the

⁴⁹ LPBT, p. 434.

⁵⁰ LPBT, p. 186.

lines are ambiguous, which can be understood either as prophesy the coming of Arthur or prophesy in front of Arthur.⁵¹ In either case Arthur does not play any part in this poem, therefore it need not concern us here.

Kadeir Teyrnnon, though much shorter than *Kat Godeu* (79 lines compared to 249 of the other), tells us more about Arthur. Arthur is called 'blessed' in the poem, and together with Teyrnnon and Heilyn, and as the last and the highest of the three, praised as 'a defence in battle, / trampling nine [at a time].'⁵² We are familiar with this kind of portrayal of Arthur from the poems by *Beirdd y Tywysogion*, now if we think of the probability that Llywarch ap Llywelyn (Prydydd y Moch) was the author of the texts in the Book of Taliesin,⁵³ it gives us more admiration perhaps for the diversity and colorfulness of his poetical activities, but less surprise, for it would be completely in harmony with the references to Arthur from the poems securely attributed to him, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

1.6. Arthur in Other Miscellaneous Texts

Apart from these main collections of medieval Welsh manuscripts examined above, a few miscellaneous texts with references to Arthur do fly around here and there and have caught the attention of modern scholars.

It might not be taken as proper to call *Annales Cambriae*, *Historia Brittonum* and *Historia Regum Britanniae* 'miscellaneous' in their own right, especially the last

⁵¹ See LPBT, 5.239n; also AW, p. 51-2.

⁵² LPBT, p. 296.

⁵³ For the discussion of the authorship of the Book of Taliesin, see LPBT, pp. 27-36.

one, yet both the Welsh chronicle and the work attributed to 'Nennius' give us nothing but (mostly unidentifiable) geographical information and tell us nothing about the personality of Arthur himself. Geoffrey's work is a masterpiece of medieval creative writing that made use of traditional sources and turned them into a literary lobsouse with genius, but talking about the original status of the sources, they must have existed in piecemeal before being woven into an unified narrative. As Geoffrey's Arthurian sections are well known to present day readers and there have been hundreds of specialised studies, I do not intend to discuss Arthur's portrait in *Historia Regum Britanniae* in this work.

Two dialogue poems are often discussed, namely, a dialogue poem between Arthur, Melwas, Gwenhwyfar and possibly Cai too, and *Ymddiddan Arthur a'r Eryr*.⁵⁴ The first *ymddiddan* poem is found in two disjointed parts (known as texts A and B) in 16th- and 17th-century manuscripts Wynnstay 1 and Llanstephan 122, yet its composition date might be much earlier.⁵⁵ The text is too fragmentary for us to reconstruct any context for it. Nevertheless, in text A Arthur does appear in a manner consistent to that of *Culhwch ac Olwen* and he refuses to pour wine for Melwas because the latter has a bad reputation of being a coward. They (or probably Gwenhwyfar and Melwas) run into mutual insulting with words towards the end of text A. Arthur is absent in text B. This poem could have been a successful piece of comedy work if we were able to see it in its entirety, I suppose, because the air is light and the characters are all speaking in an entertaining way. This proves at least

⁵⁴ See for example AW, pp. 57-61.

⁵⁵ See discussion by Evan D. Jones, 'Melwas, Gwenhwyfar a Chai', BBCS 8 (1935-37), 203-8.

that the image of Arthur doesn't have to be sober and noble and epic - he would do well as a drama king, as Gwenhwyfar would fit as a drama queen.

Ymddiddan Arthur a'r Eryr shares nothing in common with the other dialogue poem. In it Arthur's dead nephew Eliwlad comes to him in the form of an eagle, and after revealing his identity, teaches Arthur the basics of Christian doctrine. This poem has always been regarded as being more religious than legendary, and there is no dispute of its classification by Jarman. In this poem Arthur appears as an ignorant king who knows nothing about Christianity, but is curious and willing to learn about it. It is generally agreed upon that this poem is designed to serve as something similar to an essential catechism for lay persons, and that the names of Arthur and Eliwlad are only borrowed to add to its plausibility to the less learned public. The earliest manuscript that records the poem is Oxford Jesus College 3 (c. 1350), but the composition of the poem could be earlier.⁵⁶ It doesn't seem likely that the poem had exerted perceivable influences on the development of Welsh Arthurian tradition, even though unlike the Saints' Lives (originally composed in Latin), it was composed in the vernacular Welsh tongue. The only thing that interests me in this poem is that Arthur calls himself a bard at the beginning of the text. This echoes the triad 'Tri Oferfardd',⁵⁷ as Marged Haycock has noted.⁵⁸

Now the question is: how can these various descriptions of Arthur be integrated into one coherent image? The answer we get from the works of medieval Welsh poets is very practical: it doesn't matter, as long as it helps make good poems. We

⁵⁶ See for example Janem Mary Williams, *Darlun*, p. 169; Patrick Sims-Williams, AW, p. 58.

⁵⁷ TYP⁴, triad 12.

⁵⁸ BBGCC, p. 297.

will see it in detail in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2: The Portrayal of Arthur in Medieval Welsh Poetry

2.1. Arthur in the works of *Beirdd y Tywysogion*

The poetry of *Beirdd y Tywysogion* is kept mainly in two manuscripts, the Hendregadredd Manuscript (NLW 6680B) compiled during the first quarter of the 14th century and the Red Book of Hergest (Oxford, Jesus College 111) of c.1400.⁵⁹ In addition to these two famous manuscripts, NLW 4973B in the hand of Welsh renaissance scholar John Davies of Mallwyd is also as an important source of the poetry of the *Gogynfeirdd*, for it preserves a number of poems that are not otherwise available to us.

We might be surprised to find that the references to the name of Arthur in the poetry of *Beirdd y Tywysogion* are so few, considering his popularity during the 12th and the 13th centuries, which is generally assumed to be already big and still rising particularly with the publication of Geoffrey's *Historia*. There are only 17 references to Arthur in 16 poems from the entire corpus of poetry of *Beirdd y Tywysogion*, which makes it practical to list below all the places in their works where Arthur's name appears.

(1). Anonymous (c.1215), 'Mawl Llywelyn ab Iorwerth a'i deulu' (CBT VI 20.83)⁶⁰

⁵⁹ MWM, p. 85.

⁶⁰ The list is arranged alphabetically according to the poet's name. The Roman numbers in the brackets indicate the volume number in CBT and the Arabic numbers that follow indicates the poem and the line in the volume. The quoted texts are taken from CBT editors' rendering in modernised spelling accompanying the original manuscript text for every poem in CBT.

Caeroedd ar gyhoedd, ar gytgam -- cynnygn,
Eu cynnif rywnaetham,
Arthur gynt ffwyr luchynt fflam
A'u ceisiai fal y'u cawsam.

This praise poem is a series of 24 stanzas in the metre of Englyn Unodl Union, praising Llywelyn ab Iorwerth by listing twelve of his victorious battles in Powys, Deheubarth and the Welsh Borders. It is possible that Llywarch ap Llywelyn (Prydydd y Moch) was its author, but this is not certain.⁶¹ In the stanza that contains Arthur's name, Arthur is mentioned for his fierceness in battle like flame, one of the most conventional aspects of his character. The number of Llywelyn's battles listed in the poem reminds us of Arthur's twelve victorious battles in *Historia Brittonum*. This is a layer beneath the name, and although it is difficult to be sure, it is likely that the anonymous poet here had direct knowledge of the Arthurian record by 'Nennius' rather than through the work of Geoffrey, because the narrative structure of the battle list in HB is reflected quite faithfully in this poem.

(2). Bleddyn Fardd (*fl.* c.1240-1283), 'Mawl Rhys ap Maredudd ap Rhys' (CBT VII 46.24)

Ysgafn oedd gennyf ysgarad -- pob dyn
Wrth hwn: Llywelyn, llyw Berfeddwlad,
Ysgor côr, Cymru ddiffreidiad,
Aesgur fal Arthur, erthyst laddiad.

⁶¹See editor's introduction to this poem, CBT VI, pp. 297-301.

This is a short *awdl* of 32 lines composed mostly in the metre of Gwawdodyn. The editor's opinion is that this poem was composed between the summer of 1276 and the spring of 1277 when the poet of Gwynedd was visiting the court of Rhys ap Maredudd ap Rhys (grandson of the Lord Rhys) in Deheubarth.⁶² It is not Rhys but Llywelyn ap Gruffudd who is the object of this section, and he is referred to here as 'shattering a shield like Arthur, cautionary slayer'. Again here Arthur appears completely in the image of a traditional war hero. The name of Eliwlad appears earlier in the same poem, however both names are referred to simply as symbols of bravery here and nothing suggests any relationship similar to that of Arthur and Eliwlad in *Ymddiddan Arthur a'r Eryr*.

(3). Bleddyn Fardd, 'Marwnad Llywelyn ap Gruffudd ap Llywelyn' (CBT VII 51.8, 19)

Llas Bendigeidran gydfryd -- â chymri,
A chymraw oedd hefyd:
Llas Llywelyn llafngreulyd,
Llas Arthur, benadur byd.

Tra fu fawr ein llawr mewn lluoedd -- â llaw,
Llwyr amddiffyn pobloedd,
Rhwyf rhwysg Arthur, mur moroedd,
Rhuddgoch gatgun eiddun oedd.

⁶² CBT VII, pp. 540-1.

This touching elegy consists of nine stanzas of Englyn Unodl Union, composed shortly after the death of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in 1282.⁶³ Although not as famous as the elegy to the same Llywelyn by Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch, the same genuine feeling of heavy loss and even the coming of the end of the world is conveyed skilfully in full force in this poem, which in my opinion makes it stand out as one of the best elegies by *Beirdd y Tywysogion*. There are two stanzas containing Arthur's name, the first, as we see, is a direct comparison of the death of Llywelyn to the death of Arthur, and Arthur is called 'ruler of the world' here. The second emphasises Arthur as a defender of the Island in the face of the seas and his bloodthirstiness in battle, which echoes his image in some triads and the oral tradition.

(4). Bleddyn Fardd, 'Marwnad Tri Mab Gruffudd ap Llywelyn' (CBT VII 54.30)

Gwaed raeadr baladr, o lin Beli,
 Gwaywddur fal Arthur wrth Gaer Fenlli,
 Gwawr aruthr gwychruthr am gochi -- eurgledd
 Pan aeth gwŷr Gwynedd tuedd Teifi.

This elegy is an *awdl* of 44 lines in the metre of Gwawdodyn. The object of this elegy is three sons of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, Owain, Llywelyn and Dafydd, but the context of this poem is unclear, therefore we know neither exactly when nor where the poem was composed.⁶⁴ The editor notes that the inspiration for the composition

⁶³ CBT VII, p. 587.

⁶⁴ CBT VII, pp. 616-7.

of this poem was an *awdl* by Dafydd Benfras. This helps us understand the construction and theme of the elegy, which is rather traditional, and the values praised here are what we could expect to see as conventions in Welsh eulogies and elegies of this period, such as military excellence, lordly generosity in general, especially towards the poets. What makes the poem a little bit interesting for us is that the line containing Arthur's name demonstrates the poet's knowledge of the legend of Arthur and Benlli Gawr, and this reference is not only out of the consideration for the metre, although it is obvious that 'Arthur' alliterates with 'aruthr' and 'gwychruthr' in the next line as well.

(5). Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr (*fl.* c.1155-1195), 'I osgordd Madog ap Maredudd pan fu farw Madawg, am glybod eu godwrf' (CBT III 9.16)

Godwrf a glywaf ar glawr llafur -- rhai,
Rhyfelglod disegur,
Teulu Madawg, mawrglod fur,
Mal gawr torf teulu Arthur.

This poem is worth scholarly attention in its own right. It is a very short one, containing only 5 stanzas of Englyn Unodl Union.⁶⁵ Three things make the poem special among Cynddelw's work to the court of Powys: it is sung to the host of Prince Madog ap Maredudd of Powys instead of to the lord himself, which is not

⁶⁵ The original poem was probably longer, but in its extant form it ends with line 21 when it comes to the end of a page in the Hendregadredd Manuscript from which the edited text is taken. The rest of the poem has not been preserved because the next page of the manuscript is lost. See the editor's note, CBT III 9.21n, p. 112.

very common for poetry of this period. More strikingly, the tone of the poem is cheerful and exultant without a slightest tint of grief or the feeling of loss, though logically it should be an elegy. Thirdly, it is not by piling up the battles in which they won victories but by comparing Madog's retinue to famous war bands in the past that Cynddelw was praising them.⁶⁶ Therefore it is no surprise to see them compared to Arthur's host for their achievements in fighting and defending the land. Other things that may be of interest to us are references to the host of Benlli Gawr and the triad 'Tri Diwair Deulu'. There didn't seem to be any obstacle for the poet to compare the same host simultaneously to two war bands that were hostile to each other according to the legend of them, as long as they have the same sort of merit.

(6). Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr, 'Canu i Dduw' (CBT IV 17.67)

Rhybu erthyst in: rhybu Arthur -- gynt,
 Rhybu amgyffrawd gwynt, gwân tra mesur;
 Rhybu Ul Cesar, ceisiasai Fflur
 I gan udd Prydain, prid ei hesgur.

The significance of this poem to our current study is that it is the sole example of the name of Arthur mentioned in a religious poem in the works of *Beirdd y Tywysogion*. However, nothing exciting can be found in this *awdl* with five stanzas (*caniad*) that amount to 142 lines in total, for the name of Arthur is quoted here only as material to support the theme *Ubi Sunt?* together with other names of heroes and

⁶⁶ CBT III, p. 105.

powerful rulers in the past such as Julius Cesar, Brân fab Llŷr, Hercules, Alexander the Great, etc. as the editor points out.⁶⁷ Even though Arthur's swiftness in battle is mentioned here (as piercing his enemies beyond measure, like a gust of wind), it is plain that Cynddelw sees Arthur as a character who belongs to a legendary past, a standard of military feat and a representative of earthly glory, handy to be used to contrast the insignificance of human beings against the greatness of God.

(7). Gwalchmai ap Meilyr (*fl.* 1132-1180), 'Arwyrain Madog ap Maredudd' (CBT I 6.8)

Ethyw dy ergryd yn eithafoedd byd,
Arthur gedernyd, menwyd Medrawd;
Madawg maws odrudd, mygrf ab Maredudd,
Meirïau drabludd, drablawdd ffosawd.

This short *awdl* of 22 lines attracts us by its references to Arthur and Medrawd in the same line, the only example to be seen of this in the works of *Beirdd y Tywysogion*. The Powysian Prince Madog ap Maredudd is praised here as of the strength of Arthur and the 'menwyd' of Medrawd. The reference to Arthur in this poem is conventional, and therefore relatively dull compared to that of Medrawd, for given that Geoffrey made Medrawd the one who abducted Gwenhwyfar, if we take the word 'menwyd' here to mean 'pleasure, mirth',⁶⁸ the poet seems here either to have chosen to neglect Geoffrey because he thought that his account mistook

⁶⁷ CBT IV, p. 301.

⁶⁸ GPC¹, p. 2540.

Melwas for Medrawd, or that he was approving of the abduction as a heroic deed. Even if we take the word by its more neutral meaning ‘nature, disposition’, there is no tinge of negative light in this occasion at all.

(8). Llygad Gŵr (*fl.* 2nd half of the 13th century), ‘Mawl Llywelyn ap Gruffudd’ (CBT VII 24.154)

Iddaw i gynnal (cleddyfal clau)
Mal Arthur wayw dur ei derfynau,
Gwir frenin Cymru cymraig ddoniau,
Gwrawl hawl, boed hwyl oddehau!

This is an *awdl* of 156 lines, containing five stanzas and using four different metres. Editorial opinion is that it was composed in 1258, when Llywelyn was faring well in his career and high in spirit, therefore it is not surprising to see that it gushes with 'nationalist' zeal and prophetic elements.⁶⁹ Arthur, however, is not presented as *Mab Darogan* in this poem, but simply as a traditional hero for his prowess in war, with specific reference to his solid spear. The name of Llachau appears some 29 lines earlier in the same poem, yet again his image is conventional as well: fierce like lightning.

(9). Llywarch ap Llywelyn (Prydydd y Moch) (*fl.* 1174/75-1220), ‘Mawl Rhodri ab Owain o Wynedd’ (CBT V 5.12)

⁶⁹ CBT VII, pp. 220-3.

Nid cynna iddaw Eiddol, nes
Nog Arthur, eirth ddragon wales.
Nid cynnwys ei lu, nid cynnes -- ei lid,
Ei lochi nid afles.

Llywarch ap Llywelyn alone stands out from all the other *Beirdd y Tywysogion* in his preference for using Arthur's name in his poetry. Thirty of his poems have survived to the present day, adding up to 1,780 lines;⁷⁰ eight out of these 30 poems contain Arthurian personal names, and among these eight, six have the name of Arthur in them.

This one is an *awdl* of 70 lines in the metre of *Byr a Thoddaid*, composed in 1175, when Rhodri had won victory in the battle near Aberconwy.⁷¹ The virtues for which Rhodri son of Owain Gwynedd is praised are traditional: his military qualities, generosity and his sovereignty. Arthur is described here as the protector and leader of brave soldiers. It also mentions that 'his host is not few, his anger is not gentle' and 'his satisfaction is not a bad thing', the picture that we are already familiar with from traditional tales.

(10). Llywarch ap Llywelyn, 'Marwnad Gruffudd ap Cynan o Wynedd' (CBT V 11.53)

Hael Arthur, modur, myd angudd, -- am rodd,
Hael Rhydderch am eurfudd,

⁷⁰ CBT V, p. xxvii.

⁷¹ CBT V, p. 50.

Hael Mordaf, hael mawrdeg Nudd,
Haelach, greddfolach Gruffudd.

The quoted text is the last stanza in the elegy 14 of Englynion Unodl Union, composed c.1170. It is obvious that the poet is referring to the triad ‘Tri Hael’ here,⁷² and he knew that Arthur was the fourth character added to the three, and here he skilfully converted it into praise for Gruffudd ap Cynan by saying that his patron is more generous than the four above.

(11). Lywarch ap Llywelyn, ‘Marwnad Maredudd ap Cynan o Wynedd’ (CBT V 12.8)

Parawd ysbyddawd i esbyd -- Prydain,
Udd prydfawr ei wryd,
Maredudd, marw yw hefyd:
Mal Arthur arth gryd.

This elegy is made up of 12 Englyn Unodl Union, presumably composed c.1212 when Maredudd died. The special thing about this poem is, as the editor comments, that instead of praising the bravery and generosity of his patron, the poet complains about the injustice of death that took the life of his patron early.⁷³ In this stanza the generosity of Maredudd (holding feasts) and bravery are indeed mentioned, and Maredudd is described as ‘like Arthur, the bear in combat’. The word ‘arth’ here does alliterate with Arthur’s name, but since great warriors are often

⁷² TYP⁴, triad 2.

⁷³ CBT V, p. 120.

compared to predatory beast or bird of prey such as eagle, wolf or lion, the comparison of Arthur to bear is traditional too.⁷⁴

(12). Llywarch ap Llywelyn, 'Mawl Llywelyn ab Iorwerth o Wynedd' (CBT V 20.5)

Hy byddai Arthur, eirthiaw hyn -- â'i lu,
Eilyw oedd o'i gylchyn,
Milwr gwlydd milwyr gryd gryn,
Mal ydd wyt heddiw, hyddyn.

This is the second of twelve stanzas of Englynion Unodl Union which construct the eulogy. The poem doesn't have a title in manuscripts but editor's opinion is that it is very likely to be Llywarch ap Llywelyn's work, composed c.1199, and therefore have edited it under his name.⁷⁵ The first stanza mentions that Christmas was bitter for the Englishmen, because Llywelyn the Great had given them a heavy blow in battle. The second stanza, the one quoted here, continues the narrative of the previous one and compares Llywelyn's achievement to that of Arthur and his host, who were known in HB and HRB as having been fighting against the Saxons in his days. There is no clear evidence of Geoffrey's influence here, however, because the third line calls him 'the gentle soldier (understood as leader) of the soldiers', and the second line says that 'there was sadness around him', it could be understood as meaning Arthur having lost many good men of him in battle, but it might also

⁷⁴ For a detailed investigation of references to birds and other animals in Welsh literature up to c. 1400, see Patricia Lynne Williams, *Natur mewn llenyddiaeth Gymraeg hyd c. 1400* (PhD thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1999), chaps. 2 and 3.

⁷⁵ CBT V, p. 185.

indicate that there might be some lost stories about the cause of Arthur's sadness, such as we might feel from the atmosphere looming at the edge of the narrative of 'Pa gur yv y porthaur?'.⁷⁶

(13). Llywarch ap Llywelyn, 'Mawl Llywelyn ab Iorwerth o Wynedd' (CBT V 23.64)

A phreiddiau ewïar,
Mwth y rhydd arwydd yng ngwasgar,
Mal Arthur, cain fodur Cibddar,
Can a chan a cheinwyll a gwâr,
Cant a chant a chynt nog adar.

This is a long, passionate *awdl* containing 208 lines, divided into four stanzas, sung mainly in the metre of Byr a Thoddaid. Its composition is dated to 1213.⁷⁶ The reference to Arthur appears near the end of the first stanza (lines 1-66). The value praised in these lines is Llywelyn's generosity. He is compared to Arthur, yet to be honest the thing Arthur is doing that shows his generosity in the next two lines is vague. In addition, we know nothing about the Cibddar here, except that in CO the name Drych son of Cibddar appears in Culhwch's roll-call. We may assume that Llywarch knew some kind of story about him, yet again, it has been lost to us. Thus we can only guess that here it is meant that Arthur was giving out good horses. If so, it echoes the similar reference in Seisyll Bryffwrch's poem about 40 years earlier (no.15 below), and we may regard it as a proof of elements attached to the concept

⁷⁶ CBT V, pp. 210-1.

of Arthur passing from one generation of poets to the next.

(14). Llywarch ap Llywelyn, 'Mawl Rhys Gryg o Ddeheubarth' (V 26.96)

Ef gorau rhïau rhyaned
Er Arthur, llary fodur lliwed.

This *awdl* of 146 lines and four stanzas was probably composed c.1220. The metre used is Byr a Thoddaid. The name of Arthur appears here after a couple of lines describing the generosity of Rhys Gryg, these two lines continue the narrative by saying that 'he is the best lord ever born since Arthur, the generous leader of an army'. Again Arthur's name is attached to the concept of generosity, a traditional attribute of his personality, and it is not possible to discern Geoffrey's influence here, because his account agrees with the traditional concept in this regard.

(15). Seisyll Bryffwrch (*fl.* 1155-1175),⁷⁷ 'Marwnad Owain Gwynedd' (CBT II 22.27)

Cyfaith gâr llachar, lluch ryfyg -- Arthur,
Gosgordd ddôr am gôr, am gynnig,
Gwasgarai gweisgfeirch mai mawrthig,
Ced hyrwydd ffriwlwydd, ffrwyn ddyfrig,
Colofn clwyf, nid oedd clod fenffyg!

⁷⁷ These dates are taken from NCLW, p. 672, as the editor in CBT states only that Seisyll was a contemporary of Cynddelw and that there was probably a bardic contention between the two poets.

This elegy of 53 lines contains two stanzas. It is inferred to have been composed shortly after 1170, the year of Owain Gwynedd's death. The reference to Arthur appears at the beginning of the second stanza. Here Owain Gwynedd, the most powerful ruler of Wales during the middle of the 12th century, is exalted as having been a splendid friend with the 'rhyfyg' of Arthur, a defender of the host in his court and of those who sought for protection, a generous lord who gives out his trained horses and holds prosperous feasts, a tender of the wounded and the sick. Apart from the ambivalence in the meaning of the word 'rhyfyg' - which can either positively mean 'valour, boldness' or negatively mean 'presumptuousness, arrogance'⁷⁸ - we see in these few lines all the positive characteristics of Arthur from *Culhwch ac Olwen*, the Three Romances and other potential sources mentioned in Chapter 1. The amusing thing is, taking the negative meaning of 'rhyfyg' into account, the portrayal of Arthur here even matches to a larger extent the traditional image of him in the triads. It is apparent that the poet was praising Owain Gwynedd throughout the poem, yet it is not impossible that he was also expressing his own slight criticism of Owain's pride in an indirect way by playing with the two implications of the word. This should remain as speculation, though, since we do not know exactly the relationship between Seisyll and Owain Gwynedd.

(16). Y Prydydd Bychan (*fl.* 1222-1268), 'Mawl Maredudd ab Owain' (CBT VII 10.3, as 'mab Uthr')

⁷⁸ GPC¹, p. 3135.

Oesfyr dy alon, aesfriw -- Faredudd,
Trawsfalch udd treis wladwiw,
Pwyll mab Uthr, rhwyf aruthr rhiw,
Pwyllawg pâr drylliawg, drilliw.

Maredudd ab Owain was the chief patron of Y Prydydd Bychan in Ceredigion. This poem is an eulogy of him comprising seven Englynion Unodl Union that add up to 28 lines. The themes of the poem are generally in the mainstream of praise poetry of the time, except that the feeling of the poet against the English is openly expressed in it. In the first stanza ‘son of Uthr’ is mentioned, and as the editor notes, it is most likely that the poet means Arthur here, and the best reading of this half line would be ‘the wisdom of Arthur’, although in theory it cannot be excluded that Pwyll in the First Branch of the *Mabinogi* is meant here and that he was once regarded as a son of Uthr.⁷⁹ The allusion to Arthur as a person of wise judgment is not lacking in the Three Romances and above all in *Ystorya Trystan*, but it is exceptional in the corpus of the poetry of *Beirdd y Tywysogion*. The editor comments that this demonstrates that Y Prydydd Bychan was familiar with Arthurian legends, and this reference is one of the few early ones that are completely independent of the tradition altered by Geoffrey of Monmouth, thus suggesting that the image of a native Arthur was circulating in the courts to which Y Prydydd Bychan was connected as a family tradition.⁸⁰ I agree with this opinion generally, yet I think that we do not necessarily need to restrict its circulation in the courts of the Welsh

⁷⁹CBT VII 10.3n.

⁸⁰CBT VII, p. 83.

Princes - it might have been the widely accepted concept of Arthur by the public at that time as well.

To give a brief conclusion, the Poets of the Princes seem to take a liberal attitude towards the use of the name of Arthur in their poems. When they see it suits the need for meaning, rhyme or simply their own personal interests, they use it in their works, but there is no evidence suggesting that they take the existence of a historical Arthur seriously, or that they bother to think of this question at all. Arthur was already regarded virtually as a figure in literature. His image is not too monotonous, however, for though he appears chiefly as a symbol of military prowess, generosity and leadership, his wisdom and perhaps his pride in a negative sense are also noticed by *Beirdd y Tywysogion* and represented in their works.

2.2. Arthur in the works of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*

There are over a hundred references to Arthur in the entire corpus of the poetry of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*. This is only natural if we consider the amount of poems that have survived in the manuscripts. The Red Book of Hergest is the only pivotal collection for the work of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* up to c.1450, from that time onwards the number of manuscripts soars, but none of them can match the Red Book in size and quality.⁸¹ In spite of the remarkable increase of the number of extant

⁸¹ MWM, p. 88.

manuscripts, however, there is no evidence indicating a correspondent increase of interest in Arthurian legends, or in quoting those legends in poetry, except personal interest shown by several individual poets.

Given the limited space of the thesis, it is not possible to list all the lines of poetry containing Arthur's name in the works of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*, as we do in the previous section of this chapter. Nonetheless, I will list all the locations that I have found Arthur's name to occur in their works, arranged in the alphabetical order of the names of the poets, divided into two parts by the year 1400, along with the title of the poems, to give readers a rough idea about the type and subject of the poem, so that readers with a further interest would have no difficulty to find them. Then I will distinguish those in which Arthur is no more than a symbol of a certain kind of quality or value from those of genuine interest to us, and examine the latter in detail.

There are 23 references to Arthur in 22 poems in the works of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* up to c.1400:

Casnodyn: 'Marwnad Madog Fychan o Dir Iarll' (GC 2.60, 149)

Dafydd ap Gwilym: 'Awdl i Ifor Hael' (DGnet 11.10)

Dafydd y Coed: 'Moliant Rhydderch ab Ieuan Llwyd o Lyn Aeron' (GDC 1.7)

-----: 'Moliant Hopgyn ap Tomas o Ynysforgan' (GDC 3.116, with Hopgyn ap Tomas described as '[g]ŵr Arthuraidd')

Einion Offeiriad (ob.1349): 'Moliant Syr Rhys ap Gruffudd' (GEO 1.33)

Examples in the Grammar book of Einion Offeiriad (GEO At.C.6.3, At.C.24.3)

Gruffudd ap Maredudd ap Dafydd: 'Moliant Tudur Fychan ap Goronwy o Drecastell a Phenmynydd' (GGMDi 2.11)

-----: 'Englynion i Oronwy Fychan ap Tudur pan oedd yn glaf' (GGMDi 5.134)

-----: 'Moliant i noddwr anhysbys' (GGMDi 8.2)

-----: 'Marwnad Syr Hywel y Fwyall o Eifionydd' (GGMDiii 2.52)

-----: 'Serch gwrthodedig' (GGMDiii 4.1)

Gruffudd Gryg: 'Cywydd ymryson cyntaf Gruffudd Gryg' (DGnet 23.37)

Gruffudd Llwyd: 'I Owain Glyndŵr' (GGLI 12.34)

Iolo Goch: 'Moliant Syr Rosier Mortimer' (GIG XX.103)

-----: 'Cywydd y Llafurwr' (GIG XXVIII.30)

-----: 'Cywydd y Llong' (GIG XXXIII.37)

Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig Hen: 'Moliant Hopcyn ap Tomas o Ynysforgan' (GLIG 6.43)

Madog Dwygraig: 'Moliant Morgan ap Dafydd ap Llywelyn o Rydodyn' (GMD 3.28)

-----: 'Moliant Hopgyn ap Tomas o Ynysforgan' (GMD 4.48)

Meurig ab Iorwerth: 'Moliant Hopgyn ap Tomas o Ynysforgan' (GDC 13.51)

Rhisierdyn, 'Marwnad Hywel ap Gruffudd o Eifionydd' (GSRh 6.85)

Arthur is presented as having the following attributes in these poems:

As an ideal of man in every respect but particularly as a warrior or soldier:

GDC 1.7; GSRh 6.85; as a defender of the land: DGnet 23.37; GC 2.149; as the object of the poets' eulogies: GEO 1.33; GEO At.C.6.3; as a lover: GGMDiii 4.1; as a frivolous person: GIG XXXIII.37; as a plunderer: GIF XXVIII.30; general direct comparison: GDC 3.116; GLIG 6.43; GMD 4.48; praised for his military skills, especially for his bravery and fierceness in battle: GC 2.60; GEO At.C.24.3; GGLI 12.34; GGMDi 5.134; his grace: GIG XX.103; his high pedigree: GGMDi 2.11; his nobility: GGMDiii 2.23; his pride (without negative import): DGnet 11.10; his victoriousness: GMD 3.28; his court as a place of protection and shelter: GDC 13.51;⁸² his shield: GGMDi 8.2; bearing a cross: GIG XX.103.

The reference in GGMDi 8.2 mentions 'the shield of Arthur' (Arthur ysgwyd), which reminds us of the record in *Historia Brittonum*, but the choice of this word might be a result of the need for rhyme, because 'ysgwyd' rhymes with 'diarswyd' in the previous line.

'Serch gwrthodedig' (GGMDiii 4.1) draws our attention by its unusual reference to Arthur as a lover, and not towards Gwenhwyfar her wife, but towards the daughter of Garwy Hir, that is, Indeg, according to the legends. The poem consists of 15 stanzas on *englynion*, and the first stanza reads:

Mau ddogngur Arthur o orthir -- Prydain,
Er dyn prifdeg llawir,
(Arwydd ei chlod a eurir,

⁸² The reference in GDC 13.51 indicates that the poet knew native legends, for he mentions Celliwig as the location of Arthur's court in the next line of the poem, instead of Caerleon, which had become popular by the end of the 14th century under the influence of Geoffrey.

Eiry hoen) am ferch Arwy Hir.

Rejected or frustrated love is the only theme of this poem, although it bears no title in the Red Book of Hergest. The object is a certain maiden from Anglesey, and in expressing his frustration and feeling of lovesick, the poet seems to be boasting of his knowledge of traditional Welsh tales, including the triads, the Welsh romances and *Breuddwyd Macsen*, for the maiden is made equivalent in beauty to Dyfr (l.7, 29), Luned (l.7), Enid (l.8), Fflur (l.12), Morfudd ferch Urien (l.22, referred to as 'glwysferch Urien' in the poem), Angharad Law Eurog (ll.15-16), Eigr (ll.21, 32, 33), Tegau (l.32), Esyllt (l.50) and Elen Luyddog (ll.51-2), as well as some of the famous lovers in legends, such as Uthr (l.24), Cynon (l.24) and Trystan (l.49). This list is not a haphazard cluster as it might look like here. The fact that the names are grouped in pairs or triads in the same stanza or across the stanzas shows that the poet was arranging his work after the widely known traditional way of allusion of his time.⁸³

The three references to Arthur by Iolo Goch are slightly more interesting than others of the same period. We might have noticed that Iolo Goch was the only poet who did not present Arthur in an entirely positive light. The allusion in GIG XX.103 is approving, and it describes Arthur as bearing or wearing a cross, a reference not otherwise known from any source except for the dubious record in *Annales Cambriae* that Arthur was carrying the cross of Jesus Christ on his shoulders at the

⁸³ Dyfr, Eigr and Tegau in the eighth stanza (ll.29-32), for example, is a typical example. For a detailed discussion of connections to triads and traditional prose tales see the editor's note of this poem, GGMDiii, pp.157-9.

battle of Badon:⁸⁴ 'Gras Arthur a'i groes wrthyd, / A'i lys a'i gadlys i gyd, / Gorau lle, ail Gaerllion / Y sy uwch, o'r ynys hon.' Here Arthur's court is also mentioned, and from the fact that Iolo Goch takes it to be in Caerleon and not Celliwig, we may say that he saw Arthur more in terms of the Three Romances and *Historia Regum Britanniae*.

Moreover, his other two references show that he was certainly familiar with the French romances of Arthur, for the neutral one (GIG XXVIII.30) calls Arthur an 'anrheithiwr' (plunderer), recalling the triad tradition and Geoffrey's at the same time, and the negative one (GIG XXXIII.37) reads thus: 'Caiff serthedd, cyffes Arthur, / Yn y tyllfaen, maen fal mur'. According to the editor, the couplet suggests that 'it is to the Arthur of the romances that is pointed to here'.⁸⁵ I agree with this view, and I would like to add that it is not the Welsh romances but French ones that Iolo Goch was thinking of on this occasion. The couplet that contains the reference is actually used by GPC as the earliest example of the word 'serthedd' as meaning 'coarse language, obscenity, bawdiness, ribaldry; discourtesy, abuse, surliness',⁸⁶ this is not unusual in French romances, whereas in the Welsh romances Arthur is never shown in such a negative light.

The number of references to Arthur by *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* c.1400-c.1525 is over a hundred, a fact that testifies to his enormous popularity during the 15th and

⁸⁴ See GIG XX.103n. For the record in *Annales Cambriae*, see Jon B. Coe and Simon Young, eds., *The Celtic Sources for the Arthurian Legend* (Felinfach: Llanerch, 1995), p. 13.

⁸⁵ GIG XXXIII.37n.

⁸⁶ GPC¹, p. 3233.

early 16th centuries. The fashion of comparing patrons to him in one aspect or another reached its height in the generation of Lewys Glyn Cothi, and continued into the next century. Below is the list:

Bedo Brwynlllys: 'Ateb Bedo Brwynlllys' (CWID XLVII.56)

Dafydd ab Edmwnd: 'Cywydd i'r gwallt' (GDE XXI.43)

-----, 'Awdl foliant i Rys o Fôn' (GDE XLIX.58)

Dafydd Epynt: 'I Gathen Sant' (GDEp 4.24)

-----, 'I ofyn gŵn gan Risiart Herbert' (GDEp 11.48)

-----, 'I Syr Rys ap Tomas' (GDEp 12.21)

Dafydd Llwyd o Fathafarn: 'Cywydd o foliant i Harri Iarll Ritsmwnt ab Edmwnd, Iarll Ritsmwnt, cyn ei ddyfod o Frytaen Fechan (Ffrainc) i ymladd â Rhisiart y Trydydd' (GDLI 1.26)

-----, 'Cywydd i Harri Seithfed wedi ennill y deyrnas, ac i Arthur ei fab ef pan aned' (GDLI 3.1)

-----, 'Cywydd brud' (GDLI 24.34)

-----, 'Cywydd i Syr Rhys ap Tomas' (GDLI 26.60)

-----, 'Cywydd brud' (GDLI 27.36)

-----, 'Cywydd y gigfran' (GDLI 50.19, 27)

-----, 'Cywydd marwnad Thomas ap Gruffudd ap Nicolas a laddwyd mewn ymladd yn y maes ym Mhennal' (GDLI 59.9)

Dafydd Nanmor: 'I Bedrog Sant am yrru'r tywod o'r Tywyn' (PWDN VI.6)

-----, 'Marwnad Rhys ap Maredudd, Arglwydd y Tywyn' (PWDN VII.37)

-----, 'I Syr Bowain o Bentre Ieuan yng Nghemais' (PWDN XVIII.5)

-----, 'I Ddafydd ap Tomas ap Dafydd' (PWDN XXII.72)

Deio ab Ieuan Du: 'I Siôn ab Edwart a Gwenhwyfar ei wraig o'r Plasnewydd'
(GDID 14.25)

Gruffudd ap Llywelyn Fychan: 'Cywydd yngylch y brudiau' (GDLI 77.35, 36)

Gruffudd Llwyd: 'Moliant i farf Owain ap Maredudd o'r Neuadd-wen ym
Mhowys' (GGLI 16.6, 12, 13, 24, 42)

Guto'r Glyn: 20 references (see separate list below)

Gutun Owain: 8 references (see separate list below)

Gwilym ab Ieuan Hen: 'Moliant Dafydd ab Ieuan ab Owain o Gaereinion ym
Mhowys' (GDID III.47)

-----, 'Awdl foliant Tomas ap Gruffudd ap Nicolas o Abermarlais' (GDID
VII.66)

-----, 'Cywydd gofyn am bais o faels gan Domas ap Gruffudd o Abermarlais i
Ddafydd Llwyd' (GDID VIII.19)

Hywel Cilan: 'Marwnad Dafydd Llwyd o Abertanad' (GHCil V.15)

-----, 'Moliant i Edwart ap Madog Pilstwn' (GHCil XXIII.42)

-----, 'I ofyn cymod i Ruffudd ap Rhys ap Dafydd ' (GHCil XXIV.20)

Hywel Dafi: 'Moliant Wiliam Herbert, iarll cyntaf Penfro' (GHD 69.17)

-----, 'Cyhuddo Guto'r Glyn o ganu celwydd gerbron Morgan ap Rhoser' (GHD
72.14=GGLnet 18a.14)

-----, 'Moliant Gwilym ap Tomas ap Gwilym' (GHD 77.31)

Hywel Swrdwal: 'Awdl foliant Rhosier Fychan' (GHS 2.59)

-----, 'Awdl foliant Wiliam Herbert' (GHS 5.22)

-----, 'Ymryson â Llawdden am farch gan Hywel Swrdwal' (GHS 18.35)

Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal: 'Moliant tri mab Rhosier Fychan' (GHS 26.2)

-----, 'Moliant Hywel ap Dafydd ap Bedo o Dregynon' (GHS 30.48)

Ieuan ap Madog ap Dafydd: 'I Siôn Pilstwn gan Ieuan ap Madog ap Dafydd'
(CYSDT 16.9)

Ieuan ap Tudur Penllyn: 'I Ieuan ap Robert ap Meredudd' (GTP 37.26)

-----, 'I Ieuan ap Robert ap Meredudd' (GTP 38.17)

Ieuan Brydydd Hir: 'I Elis Wetnal' (GIBH 1.46)

Ieuan Delynor: 'Mawl i'r marchog a dychan Syr Dafydd gan Ieuan Delynor'
(CYSDT 15.6, 7, 14)

Ieuan Deulwyn: 'Moliant i Rys Awbre' (CWID XL.2)

-----, 'Marwnad i Ddafydd Fychan o Linwent' (CWID L.38)

Ieuan Dyfi: 'I ferch' (GHCLI LX.22)

Iorwerth Fynglwyd: 'I Rys ap Siôn o Lyn-nedd' (GIF 3.57)

-----, 'I Rys ap Siôn o Lyn-nedd' (GIF 4.19)

-----, 'Ymryson â Rhisiart ap Rhys' (GIF 33.59)

-----, 'Llyma osteg a wnaeth Iorwerth i haeru i'r hwâl lyncu Ieuan Brechfa, pan
oedd briodas merch Syr Rhys ap Tomas yng Nghaeryw' (GIF 37.1)

-----, 'Llyma osteg a wnaeth Iorwerth pan haerodd y prydyddion iddo ef bobi

moch bychan yn rhith cwingod ar ddydd ei fab sant yn Saint-y-Brid' (GIF 41.2)

-----, 'I groesawu Tudur Aled' (GIF 42.2)

Lewys Daron: 'Moliant Maredudd ab Ieuan ap Robert, Dolwyddelan' (GLDar 20.32)

-----, 'Marwnad Maredudd ab Ieuan ap Robert, Dolwyddelan' (GLDar 21.13)

-----, 'Moliant Pirs Conwy, Archiagon Llanelwy' (GLDar 24.53)

Lewys Glyn Cothi: 27 references (see separate list below)

Lewys Môn: 'Marwnad Huw Lewys' (GLM IV.6)

-----, 'Moliant Owain ap Meurig' (GLM VIII.29)

-----, 'Moliant Robert ap Rhys' (GLM LI.60)

-----, 'Marwnad Syr Tomas Salbri' (GLM LIX.67)

-----, 'Moliant Syr Rhisiart Herbart' (GLM LXXXVI.58)

Llawdden: 'Moliant tri mab Owain ap Gruffudd o Riwaeson' (GLI 6.12)

-----, 'Moliant Phylib ap Rhys o Genarth' (GLI 10.10)

-----, 'I ddymuno gwellhad i Faredudd Fychan ap Maredudd o Arddfaelog' (GLI 16.15)

Maredudd ap Rhys, 'Cywydd i'r byd' (GMRh 15.31)

Owain ap Llywelyn ab y Moel: 'Moliant Siôn Grae y Pastart' (GOLIM 18.6)

-----, 'Moliant Watgyn Fychan o Hergest' (GOLIM 24.4)

Rhisiart ap Rhys: 'Marwnad Morgan Gamais o'r Coety' (GRhB 24.51)

-----, 'I Lewys ap Rhisiart Gwyn o Ferthyr' (GRhB 33.18)

-----, 'Marwnad, a moliant i fab y marw' (GRhB 39.24)

Rhys Goch Eryri: 'Ateb cyntaf Rhys Goch Eryri i Lywelyn ab y Moel' (GRhGE 7.98)

Syr Dafydd Trefor: 'I ddangos fyrred oes dyn' (GSDT 16.12)

Syr Phylib Emlyn: 'Annog brodyr Tomas, mab gordderch Syr Rhosier Fychan, i'w ryddhau o garchar yn Honfleur' (GSPE 1.29)

Tudur Aled: 16 references (see separate list below)

Tudur Penllyn: 'I Ifan ap Meredudd ap Tudur o Lanfor ym Mhenllyn' (GTP 4.22)

-----, 'I Wiliam Fychan o'r Penrhyn a'r Gaer yn Arfon' (GTP 5.44)

-----, 'I Feredudd ap Llywelyn o Uwch Aeron' (GTP 21.46)

Y Nant: 'I ofyn cleddyf gan Rys ap Dafydd ap Ieuan Fwyaf dros Rys ap Llywelyn ap Gwilym' (GYN 3.9)

-----, 'I ofyn dwbled gan Risiart ap Siancyn Twrbil' (GYN 7.86)

-----, 'I ofyn caseg gan Siôn ap Gwilym Fychan dros Domas ap Siancyn Twrbil' (GYN 8.109)

Arthur is presented as having the following attributes in these poems:

General comparison: CYSDT 16.9; GDID VII.66; GHCil XXIII.42; GHCil XXIV.20; GLM LI.60; GLI 10.10; GRhB 24.51; GRhB 33.18;

Comparison with the background of *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*: GTP 4.22;

The episode in *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy* of Arthur and Owain: GDLI 50.19, 27;

As a standard of a warrior: CYSDT 15.14; GDEp 4.24; GDID 14.25; GDID III.47; GDLI 26.60; GDLI 27.36; GDLI 59.9; GHD 69.17; GHD 77.32; GHS 30.48; GLM LIX.67; GOLIM 18.6; GOLIM 24.4; GRhB 39.24; GTP 38.17; PWDN VII.37;

As a leader in war: CYSDT 15.7;

As a defender of territory: GLM IV.6;

As a man who keeps his promises: CWID L.38;

As a man who never betrays others: CWID XLVII.56;

As a great king of the past: GDLI 3.1; GHD 72.14=GGInet 18a.14; GLDar 21.13; GLM LIX.67; GSPE 1.29;

As a secular king: GIF 42.2;

As an amateur bard: GLI 16.42;

As a learned man: CYSDT 15.6;

As an aged man: GLM VIII.29;

His age (understood as being long): GYN 8.109;

His bravery: GMRh 15.31;

His mantle: CWID XL.2; GYN 7.86;

His power or strength: GDE XLIX.58; GDLI 24.34; GLDar 20.32; GLI 6.12; GTP 21.46; PWDN XVIII.5; PWDN XXII.72;

His pride in a negative sense: GIF 4.19; GTP 5.44;

His purity: GHS 2.59;

His sword Caledfwlch: GYN 3.9;

His weapons: GDID VIII.19;

His dogs: GHCLl LX.22;

His host: GDLl 1.26; GLM VIII.29;

His throne: GDEp 12.21;

His treasure: GDE XXI.43; GRhGE 7.98;

His generosity: GLDar 24.53;

His court as the best place in the world: GDEp 11.48; GHS 5.22; GHS 26.2;
GLl 16.15;

The death of Arthur: PWDN VI.6; GHCil V.15;

His tomb: GLDar 21.13;

The legend about Arthur fighting Rhita Gawr: GLl 16.6, 12, 13, 24, 42;

The episode in HRB about Arthur fighting Ffrolo: GHS 18.35;

The account in HRB of Medrawd seizing Arthur's land while he was away:⁸⁷

GIF 3.57;

The account in HRB of Arthur's exploits in France and Medrawd's complaint
that Arthur's land should be given to him:⁸⁸ GIF 33.59;

The account in HRB of Arthur holding a feast in Caerleon:⁸⁹ GIF 37.1; GIF
41.2;

In the context of HRB about the conflict between Arthur and Medrawd: GDLl
77.35, 36;

In the context of the *Ubi Sunt?* theme: GMRh 15.31; GSdT 16.12;

The episode of *Y Seint Greal* of the image of the Grail revealing itself in

⁸⁷ Cf. BD, X.13, p. 182.

⁸⁸ Cf. BD, X.13 and XI.1, pp. 182-3.

⁸⁹ Cf. BD, IX.12, p. 157.

Arthur's court: GLM LIX.67;

The place wherere he was brought up (Caergai): GIBH 1.46.⁹⁰

'Moliant i farf Owain ap Maredudd o'r Neuadd-wen ym Mhowys' (GGL116) stands out as the only example in poetry of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* which uses an Arthurian legend as the framework. The beard of Owain ap Maredudd, patron of Gruffudd Llwyd in Powys, is the object of this 70-line *cywydd*. The beard as a symbol of manhood was a topic favoured by the poets of the 14th and 15th centuries, and Gruffudd Llwyd was neither the first nor the last to compose a praise poem on this theme.⁹¹ However, he was the only one who combined the theme with an Arthurian legend on the same theme which was made well known already by his time through Geoffrey's *Historia*.

The earliest written record of the battle between Arthur and Rhita Gawr is in *Historia Regum Britanniae*, yet we can be quite confident to say that it was one of the tales that came to the knowledge of Geoffrey in its oral form and was used by him in his creative pseudo-history, and we are lucky in this case, for it seems that he kept the main plot of the original narrative unaltered when he wrote it down.⁹² Indeed this poem by Gruffudd Llwyd can be taken as an indirect proof of the degree to which the original story is kept in Geoffrey's work. From the various kinds of

⁹⁰ This poem is one of the *ymryson* poems between Ieuan Brydydd Hir and Tudur Penllyn, and it is obvious that poking fun at the object is the intention of this reference. For a discussion of the Arthurian connection of the place Caergai in Meirionnydd, see Thomas Roberts, 'Y Traddodiad am y Brenin Arthur yng Nghaergai', BBCS 11 (1941-44), 12-14.

⁹¹ For a discussion of poems on the beard by poets of these two centuries, see Dylan Foster Evans, 'Y Bardd a'i Farf: y Traddodiad Barfol', *Dwned* 2 (1996), 11-29.

⁹² For a detailed investigation of Rhita Gawr and place names related to his name, see GW, pp. 214-8.

references in his poems we know for certain that Gruffudd Llwyd had extensive knowledge of literary traditions of Wales and beyond, and that his learning is more similar to the type we see often in a learned man of the Renaissance period.

Tudur Penllyn in GTP 4.22 says 'Wrth wŷr mân Arthur ym wyd', indicating the scene where Arthur smiled bleakly upon seeing Rhonabwy and his companions.⁹³ Whether his son Ieuan inherited this preference of comparing the strength and physical size of Arthur to that of the object of the poem we do not know, yet Ieuan ap Tudur Penllyn did exaggerate the strength of his patron Ieuan ap Robert ap Meredith by saying that 'Gŵr eiddil, beril y byd, / A oedd Arthur i wrthyd' (GTP 37.25-6).

The interesting thing about Owain ap Llywelyn ab y Moel's reference to Arthur in GOLIM 18.6 is that he quotes Geoffrey's account of Arthur's birth as a proof that bastards can be great men too: 'Brutus hen o'r brytas hardd, / Arthur beistur oedd bastardd'. Syr Phylip Emlyn made exactly the same kind of reference to Arthur in a similar context, when the object of the poem is a natural son of a noble man (GSPE 1.29). This usage of Arthurian legend is quite unique in the works of medieval Welsh poetry.

The theme of 'Cywydd i'r byd' (GMRh 15) and 'I ddangos fyrred oes dyn' (GSDT 16) is religious, therefore as we might have guessed, Arthur's name appears among other great rulers of the past such as Alexander the Great and Hector, in the framework of the *Ubi Sunt?* formula exactly as we have seen in the religious poem

⁹³ BR, pp. 6.20-7.3.

by Cynddelw, and as with Cynddelw's poem among the works of *Beirdd y Tywysogion*, these two poems are the only examples among the works of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* where Arthur's name appears in a religious context.

Iorwerth Fynglwyd obviously sees the image of Arthur in the light of *Historia Regum Britanniae* and the Saints' Lives. Arthur's name appears in seven locations in his work. Having taken the one obviously referring to Arthur son of Henry VII (GIF 13.23), four among the rest of the six bear connection with HRB: the account of Medrawd seizing Arthur's land while he was away⁹⁴ (GIF 3.57); that of Arthur's exploits in France and Medrawd's complaint that Arthur's land should be given to him⁹⁵ (GIF 33.59); that of Arthur holding a feast in Caerleon⁹⁶ (GIF 37.1; GIF 41.2) while the other two speak of Arthur as a secular king who is too proud (GIF 4.19) and that his welcome to the guests, unlike that of the saints, is trivial (GIF 42.2).

Gutun Owain has eight references in which Arthur's name is mentioned:

'I ferch ŵyl o'r uchelwaed' (OPGO VI.26)

'Cywydd i ofyn march i Ruffudd Penrhyn' (OPGO X.24)

'Cywydd dros Siôn ap Edward ap Rhys i ofyn hwtgnaiff i Gruffudd ap Rhys ap Dafydd ap Hywel' (OPGO XIII.2)

'Cywydd i ofyn cledd i Mathau Pilstwn' (OPGO XVII.14)

'Cywydd i'r Abad Dafydd' (OPGO XXIX.48)

'Cywydd i'r siambrlen hen sef Syr Wiliam Gruffudd o'r Penrhyn' (OPGO

⁹⁴ Cf. BD, X.13, p.182.

⁹⁵ Cf. BD, X.13 and XI.1, pp. 182-3.

⁹⁶ Cf. BD, IX.12, p. 157.

LIV.16)

'Cywydd moliant i Hywel ap Dafydd ap Ithel Fychan o Lan Eurgain' (OPGO LX.5)

If we look at the poems intently, however, we would find that only four of them are about Arthur himself, and are all analogies in a broad sense (OPGO XIII.2; XVII.14; LIV.6; LX.5), the others are about his mantle (OPGO VI.26), his horse (OPGO X.24), his feast (OPGO XXVIII.48; XXIX.21) and his host (OPGO XVIII.48). Considering the nature of the poems listed here (most of them request poems), it is not surprising, yet it bears witness to Gutun Owain's knowledge (and perhaps favour as well) of the triad tradition of Arthur.

References to Arthur in the work of Guto'r Glyn:

'Moliant i Syr Rhisiart Gethin ap Rhys Gethin of Fuellt, capten Mantes yn Ffrainc' (GGlnet 1.32, 49)

'Moliant i Fathau Goch o Faelor' (GGlnet 3.6)

'Moliant i Golbrwg, cartref Syr Rhisiart Herbert' (GGlnet 22.32)

'Moliant i Wiliam Herbert o Raglan, iarll cyntaf Penfro' (GGlnet 23.9, 56)

'Moliant i Phylib ap Gwilym Llwyd o Drefgwnter' (GGlnet 30.20)

'Marwnad Einion ap Gruffudd o Lechwedd Ystrad' (GGlnet 42.57)

'Awdl foliant i Syr Bened, person Corwen' (GGlnet 43.30)

'Dychan i Ddafydd ab Edmwnd' (GGlnet 67.55)

'Dychan i Ddafydd ab Edmwnd' (GGlnet 68.47)

'Moliant i Rosier ap Siôn Pilstwn o Emral' (GGlnet 74.16)

'Moliant i Siôn Hanmer ap Siôn Hanmer o Halchdyn a'r Llai' (GGlnet 75.17)

'Moliant i Siôn Talbod, ail iarll Amwythig' (GGlnet 78.10)

'Moliant i Faredudd ap Hywel o Groesoswallt' (GGlnet 95.23, 53)

'Gofyn brigawn gan Sieffrai Cyffin ap Morus o Groesoswallt ar ran Dafydd
Llwyd ap Gruffudd o Abertanad' (GGlnet 98.42)

'I gymodi ag Ieuan Fychan ab Ieuan o Bengwern' (GGlnet 106.40)

'Gofyn i Drahaearn ab Ieuan o Ben-rhos am gael benthyg Llyfr Greal ar ran
Abad Dafydd ab Ieuan o Lyn-y-groes' (GGlnet 114.18)

'Marwnad ddiennw i Syr Wiliam ap Tomas o Raglan' (GGlnet 125.7)

The reference in GGlnet 42.57 appears in a stanza where Guto'r Glyn rewrites the triad *Y Tri Oferfardd*,⁹⁷ keeping the name of Arthur, but substitutes Cadwallawn son of Cadfan and Rahawd son of Morgant for Trystan and Llywarch. To praise Einion's poetic talent Guto'r Glyn makes him the supreme fourth, following the structure allowed in the composition of triads but not in use in the original triad, giving a good example of medieval Welsh poets acknowledging the triad tradition through creating new contents for it.

There is no doubt that Guto'r Glyn knew very well about *Historia Regum Britanniae* and popular symbolic themes of continental Europe in his time, for GGlnet 23.9-10 and GGlnet 125.7 refer to the episode in HRB of Arthur going to

⁹⁷ TYP⁴, triad 12.

Rome to fight the emperor, and GGlnet 75.17 talks about him in the context of the Nine Worthies.⁹⁸ On the other hand, the traditional image of Arthur or the Arthur in *Culhwch ac Olwen* goes side by side with Geoffrey's Arthur in the poetry of Guto'r Glyn, for Arthur is presented as one who rewards the bravest according to their need (GGlnet 95.23), echoing the words he spoke to Cai in *Culhwch ac Olwen*.⁹⁹ Also the native legend about his magical mantle continues to be mentioned (GGlnet 98.42). Other references are direct comparisons (GGlnet 1.32, 49; GGlnet3.6; GGlnet 43.30), allusions to his court to which the patron's house is paralleled (GGlnet 22.32; GGlnet 74.16), descriptions of Arthur as a traditional hero of the past (GGlnet 23.56; GGlnet 67.55), as a great warrior (GGlnet 30.20; GGlnet 78.10; GGlnet 106.40), as a symbol of bravery (GGlnet 95.53), and as a representative of masculinity (GGlnet 68.47). There are no negative comments about Arthur by Guto'r Glyn in his work, and thus we might conclude that the portrait of Arthur is completely positive with Guto'r Glyn and that he chose to stay with the native Welsh tradition of Arthur rather than to follow his portrayal in the French romances which began to become popular during his lifetime.

References to Arthur in the work of Lewys Glyn Cothi:

'Awdl foliant i Siasbar Tudur' (GLGC 12.38)

'Awdl foliant Syr Rhys ap Tomas' (GLGC 15.59)

'Awdl foliant Gruffudd ap Nicolas' (GLGC 16.80)

⁹⁸ 'Y Naw Conquerwr' (the Nine Conquerors) in his poem, GGlnet 75.4.

⁹⁹ CO, ll.135-8.

'Moliant Owain ap Gruffudd ap Nicolas' (GLGC 17.51)

'I ofyn march gan Wilym ap Morgan a Rhys Owbre' (GLGC 33.27)

'Awdl foliant Llywelyn ap Gwilym' (GLGC 52.49)

'Awdl foliant Siôn ap Rhys ac Elsbedd' (GLGC 103.19)

'Awdl foliant Syr Wiliam Herbert' (GLGC 112.107)

'Awdl foliant Syr Rhisiart Herbert' (GLGC 114.36)

'Awdl i ofyn llen' (GLGC 119.24)

'Moliant Tomas ap Dafydd' (GLGC 120.27)

'Awdl briodas Robert Hwitnai ac Elis ferch Tomas Fychan' (GLGC 123.82)

'Marwnad Tomas ap Syr Rhosier Fychan' (GLGC 124.13)

'Awdl foliant Syr Tomas ap Syr Rhosier Fychan' (GLGC 130.24)

'Moliant y Bedo Chwith a Gwenllian' (GLGC 151.28)

'Moliant Ieuan ap Dafydd a Lleucu' (GLGC 152.30)

'Awdl foliant Ieuan ap Llywelyn Fychan' (GLGC 165.31)

'Moliant Ieuan ap Phylib' (GLGC 171.34)

'Moliant Meredudd ap Dafydd Fychan' (GLGC 181.6, 16)

'Moliant Dafydd Goch ap Hywel' (GLGC 190.44)

'Cywydd i Ddafydd Llwyd ap Llywelyn pan syrthiodd oddi ar ei farch' (GLGC 196.27)

'Moliant Gruffudd ap Hywel' (GLGC 206.3)

'I ofyn cleddyf gan Ddafydd ap Gutun' (GLGC 209.5)

'Moliant Rheinallt ap Gruffudd' (GLGC 214.24)

'Awdl foliant Huw Fychan ab Ieuan' (fragment) (GLGC 218.22)

'Marwnad Gruffudd ab Aron' (GLGC 233.46)

Lewys Glyn Cothi is definitely the one poet who most enjoys using Arthurian personal names in his poetry, for he alone has 27 references to Arthur and 80 in total to all the other Arthurian characters examined in this work except Llachau. He was an extremely prolific poet who sang to nearly all of the influential families and individuals in Wales during the second half of the 15th century and the first quarter of the 16th century. Another thing which makes him special is that most of his poems that have survived to this day are either written in the hand of the poet himself or copied by others during his lifetime and shortly after his death.¹⁰⁰ This has secured the authenticity of the poems and reduced the chance of scribal errors to a very low degree.

The name of Arthur appears once in a half-latinised form as 'Arthurus' in 'Awdl foliant Harri VII' (GLGC 14.54) when his pedigree is referred to. The allusion in 'Moliant Syr Rhys ap Tomas' (GLGC 15.59) in the form 'Prins Arthur' can obviously be attributed to Arthur son of Henry VII and not the legendary figure in literature, and is therefore not included in this study. The allusions in GLGC 17.51 refer explicitly to the episode in *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy* of Arthur and Owain, for the couplet reads 'Ofnodd Arthur fal goddaith / Owain a'i frain a'i ffon fraith'. The purpose for which this episode is mentioned in this poem is, obviously, to praise

¹⁰⁰ GLGC, pp. xxvii-xxviii.

Owain, son of the powerful Gruffudd ap Nicolas in Carmarthenshire, who claims that their family descends from Owain ab Urien.¹⁰¹

It is worth noting that Lewys Glyn Cothi often displays Arthur as an aged man in his poetry (GLGC 120.27; 130.24; 151.28; 152.30; 181.6, 16; 190.44), as 'hen Arthur' or 'Arthur lwyd', an image which is more in line with the Arthur in the continental romances and the work of Malory, because the Welsh tradition has never bothered to explore Arthur's age. In fact, judging from the context of *Culhwch ac Olwen* and other tales, he would be at most a middle aged man. Another two references mention Arthur's sorrow and pain. The one in GLGC 218.22 simply talks about him as 'Arthur Alaeth Frenin', and in its current fragmentary status the context doesn't give enough information for us to decide which story is referred to here. The other one is, however, very clearly from a Galfridian context: 'Arthur o'i ddolur oedd wan, / ac o ymladd Cad Gamlan, / felly'n Ynys Afallach / efô a aeth yn fyw iach.' (GLGC 196.27-30) Ynys Afallach (the Apple Island) is not seen in native Welsh Arthurian sources, although the concept of some kind of otherworldly place does exist in these texts.¹⁰² It is Geoffrey of Monmouth's creative work that attaches the place to Arthur as his final abode and the place where his wounds would be cured. Therefore it is the implication of recovery that Lewys Glyn Cothi is making use of for the theme of this poem, which can be inferred from its title even without looking at the text itself.

Other references by him fall into the traditional range of characteristics of

¹⁰¹ See GLGC 19.3-4n.

¹⁰² 'Preideu Annwfyn' is perhaps the most distinct example. See LPBT, pp. 433-51.

Arthur: general comparison: GLGC 16.80; 33.27; 112.107; 120.27; 12.82; 206.3; 209.5; as a defender of territory: GLGC 112.107; as a warrior: GLGC 52.49; as an owner of a large territory: 233.46; praised for his power: GLGC 181.6, 16; 190.44; 214.24; his fierceness in battle: GLGC 124.13; 165.13, his court: GLGC 114.36; his status as the king: 103.19; his marital relationship with Gwenhwyfar: GLGC 112.37; 123.84; and his host: GLGC 151.28.

References to Arthur by Tudur Aled:

'Mawl gŵr hael' (GTA IV.15, 17)

'Marw Marchog' (GTA X.136)

'D'enw yn fwy no dyn yn fyw, i Syr Rhys ap Tomas' (GTA XIII.22)

'Parch yw i bawb perchi i ben, i Syr Rhys ap Tomas' (GTA XIV.36)

'Tad haelioni, cywydd i Syr Roser Salbri' (GTA XX.11)

'Arglwydd Llyweni, Moliant Roser Salbri' (GTA XXI.64)

'Cywydd y pum brawd, i feibion Siôn Salbri' (GTA XXIII.40)

'Gwylltneb a gyll dynion' (GTA XXXVI.45)

'Crino dyn yw cronni da, cywydd i Reinallt ap Gruffudd ap Rhys' (GTA XL.23)

'Mawl marchog a'i wraig' (GTA XLII.20)

'Arglwydd y glyn, i Ruffudd Llwyd ab Elisau ap Gruffudd ab Ednyfed (Einion?)
o Ragad' (GTA XLVII.8)

'Y waun, cywydd i Edwart Trefor' (GTA LI.64)

'Penanmaen, moliant Maredudd ab Ieuan ap Rhobert' (GTA LIV.50)

'Yn ôl y rhain, niwl yw'r haf, marwnad Ieuan ap Dafydd ab Ithel Fychan o Degeingl a'i wraig' (GTA LXXVII.46)

'Awr, ond un, i ŵr nid oes, marwnad Tudur Llwyd o Ial' (GTA LXXIX.78)

'Camp y gof, cywydd i ofyn bwled, a marwnad Ieuan ap Deicws' (GTA CXV.38)

'Tŷ am ŵr fal toi a main, moliant Syr wiliam Gruffudd Siambren Gwynedd ac i ofyn am wisg arfau ganddo' (GTA CXVIII.47)

Nearly all the references made by Tudur Aled are traditional or conventional: general comparison: GTA XX.11; XL.23; XLVII.8; LXXVII.46; CXVIII.47; Arthur as a fierce fighter: GTA XXXVI.45; XLII.20; LI.64; as an old man: GTA LIV.50; his strength or power: GTA LIV.50; his courtesy: GTA IV.15, 17; the courtesy of the man in his court: GTA XXIII.40; his payment to the poet as gift ('treth Arthur'), showing his generosity: GTA XIV.36; his way of giving gifts: GTA XXI.64; his table (with the implication of a feast, not the Round Table): GTA CXV.38; his era: GTA10.136; and his death: GTA LXXIX.78. The implication of the reference is not very clear because of the reading of the word 'gwerthyd',¹⁰³ yet it should be that Arthur is referred to as a warrior here. Anyway, it is discernible that Tudur Aled had no intention to be innovative in the usage of Arthur's name.

Therefore we may sum up for this section that while retaining all the elements

¹⁰³ See editor's note, GTA XIII.22n.

found in the works of the Poets of the Princes, the references to Arthur in the poetry of the Poets of the Nobility exhibit a higher degree of variety regarding the characteristics of Arthur. Influences of continental Arthurian tradition became evident towards the end of the 14th century. The popularity of Arthur's name during the 15th century and the first quarter of the 16th century suggests that the learned class of Welshmen were more or less moved by the same Arthurian vogue prevailing at that time on the European continent. Nevertheless, Welsh poets of this period were not blown off by the vogue. Most of them chose to stand with the native Welsh tradition of Arthur represented by native stories and legends, and the image of Arthur remains generally positive throughout the period in question.

Chapter 3: Descriptions of Some Other Arthurian Characters in Medieval Welsh Poetry

Unlike Arthur himself, the historicity of other Arthurian figures that are thought to belong to Arthur's court or connected to him in some way seems not to have been a question that is worth a serious discussion in a historical context. Sporadic notes are found here and there in articles on place-names and linguistic characteristics of Old and Middle Welsh. Sometimes the names are also discussed in passing regarding their patronymics, if the patronymic is attested from early Welsh genealogies or other historical sources. In my opinion, however, this is not a shortcoming of research in this field, and it does not present any difficulty for the current study. Rather, it suggests a practical attitude of scholars towards this matter, that although such investigations would add value to present research of these Arthurian characters, they are not the foundation of it.

3.1. Arthur's wife, children and parents

Arthur is not given a pedigree in any Welsh or Latin sources antecedent to *Historia Regum Britanniae*,¹⁰⁴ yet as Geoffrey's coinage in this case seemed to be very successful,¹⁰⁵ I decide to follow the steps of the medieval Welsh poets and make a separate section for the direct family members of Arthur, in terms of the

¹⁰⁴ TYP⁴, p. 280-1.

¹⁰⁵ As for example we see from CBT VII10.3.

conception of Arthur's family by these poets reflected in their poems. The numerous nephews of Arthur, however, are not included in this section, whether the relationship has an established tradition, as in the case of Gwalchmai and Melwas/Medrawd, or is only occasional, as in the case of Peredur. 'The king's nephew' has long since become too convenient a device to be employed by storytellers to create a relation between a younger character (usually the hero of the tale, seeking to establish his status) and an older one (usually the king or chieftain of a place, already established) so that if they were all included here, many characters who bear no authentic Arthurian connections would be drawn into the circle, not to say that the size of Arthur's family would grow ridiculously big in this way. The same applies to the characters made to be Arthur's cousins.

3.1.1.1. Gwenhwyfar

A character as famous and as great as Arthur would have a wife that matches his status, and from a contemporary perspective we might expect her to play an important part in the tales of Arthur, and accordingly have quite a number of stories in which she is a crucial character, if not the centre of the story. From the continental tradition we have the well-known tragic love story of Guinevere and Lancelot, first in Chretien de Troyes' *Lancelot, ou le Chevalier de la Charrette*, then in the Vulgate Cycle, carried forwards in the Post-Vulgate Cycle and accumulated in Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Welsh poetry before the last two decades of the 14th century reflects

no such story with all its intensity of moral conflicts between two kinds of loyalty and love, for the figure Lancelot is not seen in any written source of Welsh poetry before that date.¹⁰⁶ Apart from Geoffrey's account of the abduction of Gwenhwyfar in his *Historia*, where he substituted the name of Melwas with that of Medrawd, we may assemble from the extant fragments of Caradog of Llancarfan's *Life of Gildas*, and to a certain extent a triad (triad 54 in TYP⁴) and two pieces of dialogue poems in MSS Wynnstay 1 and Llanstephan 122, that there was some sort of story about Gwenhwyfar and Melwas. They might vary in details, but the main plot contains at least an unfriendly visit by Melwas to Arthur's court and the abduction of Gwenhwyfar by him.

The triads do not altogether depict Gwenhwyfar in a favourable light. She is said to be the cause of the tragic battle of Camlan because of a trivial dispute between her and her sister Gwenhwyfach or Gwenhwyach;¹⁰⁷ she is said to be more faithless than the 'Three Faithless Wives of the Island of Britain';¹⁰⁸ nevertheless, since there might be three women of the same name (all as Arthur's wives, one after another in turn, I suppose),¹⁰⁹ it could be hard to say which one was faithful and which one wasn't. The discrepancies of the portrayal of Gwenhwyfar among the

¹⁰⁶ The earliest reference to Lancelot (*Lawnslo*t in the Welsh spelling) is made by Rhys Goch Eryri in his 'I lys Gwilym ap Gruffudd o'r Penrhyn' (GRhGE 2.25). The fact that the name of Galath appears in the following line of the poem (GRhGE 2.26) shows that the poet definitely knew the French story of *La Queste del Saint Graal* and *Perlesvaus*, probably from the Welsh translation known as *Y Seint Greal*, for the earliest extant manuscripts containing the translation (Peniarth 11 and Peniarth 15) are from the same period (according to the dates given by Daniel Huws, see MWM, p. 60). On the other hand it is not impossible that his knowledge of the story came directly from the French sources, for it would not be unusual for a poet of late 14th century and early 15th century Wales to master the French language, at least to the level of being able to read or listening to texts composed in French.

¹⁰⁷ TYP⁴, triads 53 and 84.

¹⁰⁸ TYP⁴, triad 80.

¹⁰⁹ TYP⁴, triad 56.

triads may point to influences from different traditions, as all four of them are from a relatively late date.¹¹⁰

In *Culhwch ac Olwen* Gwenhwyfar is mentioned twice, once by Arthur as something(!) that cannot be requested as a boon,¹¹¹ the second time by Culhwch in his roll-call,¹¹² but regarding action in the story, she is in fact absent. In the Three Romances her presence is more felt, yet except in *Gereint*, her existence is indeed rather passive.

In *Peredur* she happens to have been insulted by a nameless knight with a blow on the ear when Peredur arrived at Arthur's court. This scene parallels with the description in Triad 54 where Melwas insulted Gwenhwyfar in the same way. This suggests that in addition to the argument of Rachel Bromwich that being the object of abduction by Arthur's nephew may present an early tradition,¹¹³ the role of being a victim of insult has also been fixed to the character of Gwenhwyfar from an early period of the evolution of the Arthurian legends.

However, being Arthur's wife and therefore the hostess of his court, the image of Gwenhwyfar cannot be too far away from that of a noble woman, fair, kind, beautiful, having an authority in domestic matters of Arthur's court. We would not be surprised to find that Gwenhwyfar is thought of as a woman of exceptional beauty in *Owein*, where 'more beautiful than Gwenhwyfar' is the best thing Cynon could think of to describe the beauty of the maidens he saw in the castle in an exotic land.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ See Rachel Bromwich's note, TYP⁴, p. 377.

¹¹¹ CO, l. 161.

¹¹² CO, l. 358.

¹¹³ TYP⁴, p. 380.

¹¹⁴ *Owein*, ll. 62-3; Mab., p. 117.

Gwenhwyfar is often appealed to as a judge of the words and behaviour of the knights who dwell regularly in Arthur's court, especially Cai. She has a kind of authority in the matter within the court and her opinions are respected by Arthur's men. This can be seen most clearly from two scenes in *Peredur* and *Owein*. In *Peredur* when Gwalchmai sees that Cai stabbed Peredur (without recognising him) with his spear and injured him on the thigh because Peredur refused to speak, he addresses Gwenhwyfar:

'Lady,' he[Gwalchmai] said to Gwenhwyfar, 'can you see how badly Cai has wounded this squire just because he could not speak? Let him have medical treatment by the time I return, and I shall repay you.'¹¹⁵

We don't have Gwenhwyfar's answer here, but it should be understood as that she agrees with Gwalchmai.

In *Owein* when she hears Cai's sore words against Owain, she gives her own opinion:

'God knows,' said Gwenhwyfar, 'you should be hanged, Cai, for speaking such insulting words to a man like Owain.'¹¹⁶

She doesn't really mean to have Cai hanged, of course, and Cai's reaction shows that he accepted her blame while trying to find a decent way to get out of the situation.

'By the hand of my friend [Bedwyr], lady,' said Cai, 'you have given more praise than I

¹¹⁵ *Peredur*, p. 41, ll. 4-8; Mab., p. 85.

¹¹⁶ *Owein*, ll. 222-4; Mab., p. 121.

myself.¹¹⁷

Among her roles in the Three Romances, Gwenhwyfar is the most active in *Gereint*. In this tale she is again victim of an insult, though not herself personally this time, but her maiden and Geraint who were acting on her behalf. Seeing that Geraint didn't seek revenge upon the dwarf, she approves of his behaviour as being wise and prudent.¹¹⁸ This remark demonstrates her own prudence and wise judgment indeed, which is reflected later in the tale in Arthur's readiness to follow her advice concerning the distribution of the stag's head that Arthur has got from the hunt,¹¹⁹ and for a third time in her readiness to listen to Arthur's opinion and give her permission to let Edern son of Nudd go freely with Geraint.¹²⁰

Compared to Gwenhwyfar's character in the Three Romances, her appearance in medieval Welsh poetry is rather brief and static. She is completely absent from the works of *Beirdd y Tywysogion*. In the works of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* the name 'Gwenhwyfar' itself appears quite frequently, but that is because it was a popular female name in Welsh during that period of time, and in most cases these references are made to real women who have this name, and bear no connection to any Arthurian context. The earliest references in the works of 14th century poets in which we know for certain that they do point to the literary figure Gwenhwyfar are found in the poems of Dafydd ap Gwilym: 'Y Ffenestr' (DGnet 65.22, where she is referred to as 'ferch Gogfran Gawr'), and in 'Morfudd fel y Haul' (DGnet 111.12). Both of them

¹¹⁷ *Owein*, ll. 224-5; Mab., p. 121.

¹¹⁸ *Gereint*, l. 155; Mab., p. 143.

¹¹⁹ *Gereint*, ll. 414-20; Mab., p. 150.

¹²⁰ *Gereint*, ll. 610-19; Mab., pp. 156-7.

are love poems. In 'Morfudd fel y Haul' Morfudd is compared to Gwenhwyfar simply and directly for her beauty, a conventional virtue of Gwenhwyfar's. The implication of adultery is not explicit from the text itself, although we might make a further interpretation that the poet is enticing Morfudd to do the same as Arthur's wife Gwenhwyfar once did. Even though it might well be part of the intent of the poet, no one is able to pick up this line of poetry and blame Dafydd ap Gwilym for encouraging Morfudd to be unfaithful to her husband. Here we see the shrewdness of the poet.

The reference in 'Y Ffenestr' (DGnet 65.22) gives a vivid picture of Dafydd trying to gain access to the maiden's room. It demonstrates that Dafydd ap Gwilym was familiar with some kind of story of the abduction of Gwenhwyfar by Melwas,¹²¹ and as the editor notes, the function of the reference here is to form a contrast between Melwas's success in reaching Gwenhwyfar through a window in the fort of Caerleon and the poet's failure in front of the barred window of the maiden's house, thus enhancing the sense of frustration.¹²² It is worth noting that it is Melwas and not Medrawd whom Dafydd ap Gwilym took to be the protagonist of the tale, even though at the same time he took Caerleon as the location of Arthur's court, as did Geoffrey and the author(s) of the Three Romances, and not Celliwig as did the authors of *Culhwch ac Olwen* and 'Pa gur', showing clearly that while being knowledgeable of *Historia Regum Britanniae*, he was not a blind follower of Geoffrey. Instead, he took his own liberty to decide which version of the story was to

¹²¹ TYP⁴, p. 379.

¹²² See editor's note to the poem on DGnet. Also in Welsh in CDG, p. 660.

be credited as the authentic one.

There are two more references to Gwenhwyfar among the works of poets in the 14th century, where the context is not clear enough for us to see if it is the literary figure or a real person that is referred to, yet as they are possible references it is worth mentioning them here: one is in 'Erfyn am ei Fywyd' (DGnet 128.33), again by Dafydd ap Gwilym, where Gwenhwyfar's name is related to the city of St. David's and her pride is spoken of; the other is by Gronw Ddu in 'Moliant merch' (GMB 12.12), his eulogy to a maiden, and Gwenhwyfar is alluded to regarding her fairness or physical beauty.

The 15th century see no improvement of her popularity among the poets, for she continues to be absent, and is not seen anywhere in the poetry of this century, save one allusion by Siôn Cent, one by Hywel Dafí, and three by Lewys Glyn Cothi. The reference by Siôn Cent, as we have seen from the lines quoted above (IGE² XC.17-20), does not concentrate on the figure of Gwenhwyfar herself at all. As a poet whose chief contemplations are on religious themes, it was quite natural for him to use the name of Gwenhwyfar to represent the highest degree of secular beauty, here in a typical context of the *Ubi Sunt?* theme. The interesting point is rather that she is referred to in the same place as 'merch Gogfran gawr', showing that although Siôn Cent might have looked down upon the vernacular literary tradition for religious reasons, he did know about the family affiliation of Gwenhwyfar in the triads, and perhaps the oral tradition from which the triads originally came from as well. Hywel Dafí mentions her name in a traditional way regarding her beauty (GHD

104.23). As for the three allusions by Lewys Glyn Cothi (GLGC 112.37; 119.22; 123.84), they speak of his own personal interest in Arthurian legends in general, it seems to me, for two of them (GLGC 112.37 and 123.84) refer to her in her relationship to Arthur, and the other one emphasises her noble status.

3.1.2. Llachau

The topic of Arthur's children has not been a very attractive one to scholars, for as Ad Putter's investigation shows, Arthur's childlessness and thus the lack of a rightful heir to his throne, is a crucial factor of the tragedy and the end of the Arthurian world in the mainstream accounts of his life in HRB and the Vulgate Cycle.¹²³ In other words, the design of the narrative requires Arthur's children to be either non-existent or to die early, before his own death. This seems to be part of the substantial framework of the narrative and could not be altered, for in the Welsh tradition we do have a few names of his sons, yet where any accounts related to them have survived at all, they all appear to have died early. In the *Mirabilia* section of *Historia Brittonum*, we are told that Arthur had a son named Amr, but that he was unfortunately killed by Arthur himself. Melwas, who in native Welsh tradition is simply a nephew of Arthur, underwent a double change: first his name was replaced by Medrawd and then his identity was made complicated, as son-nephew, the child begotten as the result of Arthur's committing adultery with his own sister without

¹²³ Ad Putter, 'Arthur's Children in Le Petit Bruit and the Post-Vulgate Cycle', *Reading Medieval Studies* 38 (2012), 25-6.

knowing it.

The most prominent child of Arthur in the Welsh Arthurian narratives is Llachau, who is made equivalent to Loholt by the Welsh translators of the French Grail legend. This equivalence, as Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan notes, was made with quite an extent of hesitation,¹²⁴ giving support to the opinion that the two names are unrelated to each other at the beginning and that each one of them carries a different tradition, and that they were only tied together at a later period in the development of Arthurian literature in Wales. Llachau is mentioned in the Black Book of Carmarthen, where in 'Ymddiddan rhwng Gwyddneu Garanhir a Gwyn ap Nudd' the *persona* of Gwyn says that 'I have been where Llachau was slain, / son of Arthur, terrible in songs, / when ravens rushed to gore.'¹²⁵ His name appears in 'Pa gur' as well, although his identity as Arthur's son is only implicit there.¹²⁶ The reference to him in Triad 91 is, unusually for the case of triads, derived directly from the second part of *Y Seint Greal* and is thus a product of the above mentioned equivalence in translation, therefore it cannot be relied upon as an early source of the name.¹²⁷

There are 8 references to Llachau by *Beirdd y Tywysogion*:

Bleddyn Fardd: 'Marwnad Dafydd ap Gruffudd ap Llywelyn' (CBT VII.52.15-16)

Cynddelw: 'Canu Owain Cyfeiliog' (CBT III.16.38)

¹²⁴ Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, 'Continuity and change in the transmission of Arthurian Material: Later Medieval Wales and the Continent', in *Actes du 14e Congrès International Arthurien* (Rennes: International Arthurian Congress, 1984), p. 404.

¹²⁵ LIDC 39.49-51; EWSP, p. 507.

¹²⁶ LIDC 31.76-78.

¹²⁷ See Bromwich's note to Triad 91 in TYP⁴, p. 234.

-----: 'Marwnad Cadwallon ap Madog ab Idnerth o Faelienydd' (CBT III.21.149)

-----: 'Canu Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd' (CBT IV6.47)

-----: 'Awdl Ddadolwch yr Arglwydd Rhys' (CBT IV9.163)

-----: 'Marwnad y Mab Aillt o Lansadwrn' (CBT IV11.16)

Dafydd Benfras: 'Marwnad Gruffudd ap Llywelyn' (CBT I29.24)

Llygad Gŵr: 'Mawl Llywelyn ap Gruffudd' (CBT VII24.125)

Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr seems to be very fond of the name of Llachau, and he had good reason to be as such. Concerning contents and context, the story of the tragic early death of Llachau makes it a perfect candidate for use in elegies for men who died before reaching their middle age, especially for young men who died fighting in battles. Leaving the element of tragic death aside and focusing on his bravery, his image can also be used in eulogies as a standard for a warrior with excellent fighting skills and thus suitable as a decent comparison of the object who needs to be praised in the poem. Concerning the technical aspect of poetry composition, that is, alliteration and rhyme, as the number of disyllabic words containing 'll' and 'ch' and at the same time being able to form a meaningful line is highly limited, it is not strange that the name of Llachau should be favoured by the poets. In four of Cynddelw's references to Llachau (CBT III16.38, III21.149, IV9.163, IV11.16), his name appears together with 'llachar', and the remaining one is with 'llary' (CBT IV6.47). Dafydd Benfras and Llygad Gŵr both use the name of Llachau together with 'lluch' in the same line. This seems more than a mere

coincidence, and is more likely to be the consequence of the restricted choice of metre (although we can be sure that neither of them were copying from the other's work). The allusion made by Bleddyn Fardd provides us with some fresh information, for it mentions the place where Llachau was slain: 'Dewr a was ban llas, yn llasar-arfau, / Fal y llas Llachau is Llech Ysgar' (CBT VII52.15-16). According to Bromwich, this 'Llech Ysgar' has now be identified with Crickheath Hill, in Llanymynech, Shropshire.¹²⁸ If so, this would suggest that during the second half of the 13th century, some kind of story with a detailed description of the death of Llachau was circulating above the level of local onomastic tales, for Bleddyn Fardd was a poet that connected mainly with the court of Gwynedd. Within a century, however, this tale seemed to have been lost, for the place is not mentioned even once in the works of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*. There is possibly another lost story which was once known to Gruffudd ap Maredudd ap Dafydd, for in the reference in GGMDi 2.19, he mentions Llachau trampling thirty-five men at one time: 'Llachau glodlau yn glew dalu - gwaith, / Pan fai wyarllaith, pum saith sathru.' Unfortunately if it existed, this potential story has also been lost to us.

11 references to Llachau (including the one we have just mentioned) are found in nine poems by *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* belonging to the period up to c.1400:

Bleddyn Ddu: 'Marwnad Goronwy ap Tudur hen o Dre Castell' (GBDd 6.5)

¹²⁸ TYP⁴, p. 408.

Gruffudd ap Maredudd ap Dafydd: 'Moliant Tudur Fychan ap Goronwy o Dreicastell a Phenmynydd' (GGMDi 2.19)

-----: 'Moliant Tudur Fychan ap Goronwy o Dreicastell a Phenmynydd' (GGMDi 3.50)

-----: 'Moliant Goronwy Fychan ap Tudur o Benmynydd' (GGMDi 4.53)

-----: 'Marwnad Goronwy Fychan ap Tudur' (GGMDi 6.10)

-----: 'Moliant i noddwr anhysbys' (GGMDi 8.1)

-----: 'I annog Owain Lawgoch i feddiannu Cymru' (GGMDiii 1.41, 65)

Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig Hen: 'Moliant Hopcyn ap Tomas o Ynysforgan' (GLIG 6.4)

Rhisierdyn: 'Moliant Goronwy Fychan ap Tudur o Benmynydd' (GSRh 4.31, 51)

Llachau is depicted in these poems in the following lights: as a standard for warrior: GGMDi 2.19; GGMDiii 1.41; as a patron of the bards: GGMDiii 1.65; as a defender: GLIG 6.4; direct general comparison: GGMDi 8.1; as of a fierce nature as a warrior: GBDd 6.5; GGMDi 4.53; GGMDi 6.10; for his swiftness in fighting: GSRh 4.31, 51; his death: GGMDi 3.50; (in GGMDi 6.10 the implication is an undertone). These attributes resemble that of Arthur to a striking degree, so much so that if we might speak of the inheritance of personality for literary figures, we could say that Llachau was a true son of Arthur. Again like Cynddelw in the previous century, Gruffudd ap Maredudd ap Dafydd seems to be the one poet in the 14th

century who had a personal preference for Llachau.

Entering into the 15th century, however, it looks as if Llachau suddenly lost the favour of the poets, for among all works of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* c.1400-c.1525, we are only able to find one reference to him, and it is not in any of the works of the three 'great masters' of that period, namely Guto'r Glyn, Lewys Glyn Cothi and Dafydd Nanmor.¹²⁹ It is found in 'Moliant Ieuan Gwyn ap Gwilym Fwyaf o Bryscedwyn a Goleuddydd' (GLI 29.24) by Llawdden, a poet who was active during the third quarter of the 15th century as a touring bard or minstrel (*clêr*) at a lot of places over mid- and southeast Wales and the Welsh borders, and composed poems on a wide range of genres and themes.¹³⁰ The portrayal of Llachau in this poem is fairly traditional--he is praised for his bravery and as a paragon of soldiery. The cause of this decline in popularity can only be surmised, yet I tend to think that perhaps the spreading of French Arthurian romances in Wales was to be responsible for it, because in the French tradition Arthur is much more inactive and insignificant than in the Welsh narratives. Arthur along with his family members (except Gwenhwyfar) are marginalised to give way to the actual protagonist of the main narrative thread - Lancelot. Correspondingly, Lancelot's son Galahad (spelt as Galath/Galaath/Galâth in Welsh) takes the place formerly occupied by Arthur's son Llachau as the perfect pattern of a noble young man.

3.1.3. Uthr

¹²⁹ LIU, p. 238.

¹³⁰ For his background and career, see 'Introduction' in GLI, pp. 1-13.

If literary figures can have their own voices in a virtual literary space, I am sure that Uthr would thank Geoffrey for making him the father of such an important character as Arthur. His name is written as Uthyr in Triad 28 and Uthir in 'Pa gur', the two earliest texts containing his name. In the triad he is described as one of the three great enchanters, and he taught his magic (presumably shape-shifting skills above all) to Menw son of Teirgwaedd.¹³¹ In 'Pa gur' Mabon son of Modron is alluded to as his servant.¹³² The poem titled 'Marwnad Vthyr Pen' in the Book of Taliesin is in my opinion too dubious to be considered as genuine evidence to argue for an early connection between Arthur and Uthr.¹³³

The *Beirdd y Tywysogion* certainly knew of his story, most likely through HRB, as is mentioned already in our discussion of Arthur, yet we would have to wait until the second half of the 14th century to see him appear in his own right in Welsh poetry. There are seven allusions to him in six poems by *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* in the 14th century:

Dafydd ap Gwilym: 'Marwnad Angharad' (DGnet 9.47)

Dafydd y Coed: 'Moliant Gruffudd ap Llywelyn ab Ieuan o Forfa Bychan' (GDC 2.39, 70)

Gruffudd ap Dafydd ap Tudur: 'Cwyn serch' (GGDT 5.52)

¹³¹ TYP⁴, p. 61.

¹³² LIDC, 31.13-14.

¹³³ For the poem see LPBT, pp. 503-13.

Gruffudd Llwyd: 'I Owain Glyndŵr' (GGLI 11.36)¹³⁴

Iolo Goch: 'Marwnad Syr Rhys' (GIG VII.29)

Sefnyn: 'Moliant Goronwy Fychan ap Tudur o Benmynydd' (GSRh 3.26)

In all of the seven references, the image of Uthr is consistent with Geoffrey's account of him, while each one of them carries a different dimension. Two of them are direct comparisons (GDC 2.70; GIG VII.29), where the object is said to have the nature of Uthr, a fourth one focuses on his military achievements (GDC 2.39), and a fifth one admires his deliberation (GSRh 3.26). The one by Dafydd ap Gwilym (DGnet 9.47) and the one by Gruffudd ap Dafydd ap Tudur (GGDT 5.52) both mention Uthr in a Galfridian context about his love for Eigr. The latter might be more familiar to us, for it reminds us of the episode where Uthr visited Eigr in the guise of her husband Gwrlais and slept with her, and thus was Arthur begotten. The allusion by Gruffudd Llwyd relates to another episode in HRB, the one about Uthr seeking revenge upon the English for killing his brother Emrys Wledig (the Welsh rendering of 'Aurelius Ambrosius'), yet the Galfridian origin is equally clear here.

Uthr receives more bardic attention during the period of c.1400 to c.1525.

Lewys Glyn Cothi mentioned his name in six places in his poetry:

'Moliant Siasbar Tudur' (GLGC 11.42) mentions Uthr's territory;

¹³⁴ This poem was composed before 1400.

'Moliant Harri VII' (GLGC 14.18) mentions the zeal of Uthr and Emrys;

'Marwnad Dau Fab Phylib ap Rhys' (GLGC 189.42) has Uthr and Emrys together, pointing to the close patron-bardd relationship between them;

'I ofyn cleddyf gan Ddafydd ap Gutun' (GLGC 209.6) where Dafydd ap Gutun is likened to Uthr from the lineage of Ieuan Gethin. It is clear that the noble status is the matter stressed here;

'Marwnad Hywel ap Gronwy' (GLGC 217.34) relates to the episode in HRB of Uthr and young Myrddin's actions over the dragons;

'Marwnad Gruffudd ab Aron' (GLGC 233.46-7), where a comparison is made concerning the dignity of Uthr.

Uthr's name also appears in the following works by other *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* c.1400-c.1525:

Dafydd Llwyd o Fathafarn: 'Cywydd i Harri VII' (GDLI 23.35) pays special attention to Uthr's family connection with Emrys as brothers.

Dafydd Nanmor: 'I Wiliam Fychan o Ryd Helig' (PWDN XX.58). The reference here is a direct comparison, depicting Uthr as a distinguished warrior.

Gutun Owain: 'Cywydd y tri brodyr meibion Trefor' (OPGO XXXVII.26) where Siôn Trefor's son Edward is compared to a dragon and to Uthr at the same time.

Ieuan ap Rhydderch: 'Brud' (GIRh 4.27). The line reads 'since the time of Uthr',

therefore not in fact referring to the person.

Ieuan Deulwyn: 'I gwcwallt' (CDID V.12) relating to the episode in HRB, emphasising that Uthr got Eigr by enchantment.

Ieuan Dyfi: 'I olrhain Anni Goch' (GHCLI 57.57) where Uthr is described as the lover of Eigr.

Maredudd ap Rhys: 'Cywydd i wraig ieuanc' (GMRh 22.47), where the lines 47-52 are based directly on the episode in HRB of Uthr and Eigr.

Tudur Aled: 'Arglwydd y glyn, I Ruffudd Llwyd ab Elisau ap Gruffudd ab Ednyfed (Einion?) o Ragad' (GTA XLVII.5), a direct comparison; and 'Y waun, cywydd i Edwart Trefor' (GTA LI.37-8), where the poet says that Uthr and his son (Arthur) wouldn't be able to defeat Edwart, thus praising the latter's strength and military skills.

From this list we may summarise that from the very beginning of his emergence as a literary figure in medieval Welsh poetry, Uthr is regarded as principally being a Galfridian figure, for most of the references to him have unmistakable correspondences to the Uthr-Emrys episode, the Uthr-young Myrddin episode and the Uthr-Eigr episode in HRB. These conventional virtues as an eminent warrior and a ruler who owns a wide region of territory might have an origin prior to Geoffrey's time, but since they are not contradictory to Uthr's role in *Historia*, it seems that they were plainly fused into the Galfridian portrayal of Uthr.

3.1.4. Eigr

The image of Eigr is probably the least impressive one of all the main Arthurian characters. She is nowhere to be found in any literary text in Welsh other than *Brut y Brenhinedd*, the Welsh translation of Geoffrey's *Historia*. Geoffrey depicted her as a passively positive figure--positive in the sense that her virtue is spotless and she has nothing to be blamed in the whole thing that has happened, passive in that her character is not strong, for she seems to have accepted everything arranged for her, and silently endures the consequences of Uthr's lust. The passiveness of her character might explain the lack of interest in her by *Beirdd y Tywysogion*. It might as well be the case then, that Dafydd ap Gwilym was the pioneer who introduced the name of Eigr into medieval Welsh poetry, for we find him quoting her name 18 times in the extant corpus of his work (DGnet 9.47, 52; 20.40; 45.14; 64.44; 72.3, 21; 90.33[glwysEigr]; 95.16; 109.61; 115.20; 117.6; 123.42; 124.30; 129.4; 131.22; 136.12; 166.8) and then in the second half of the 14th century other poets started to use her name as a symbol of beauty in their own works as well. They were not necessarily followers of Dafydd ap Gwilym, but we might say that this effect is similar to that kind of Hollywood film star lifestory in which a previously unheard of actress gets chosen by a famous film director for his next work and becomes famous overnight.

Gruffudd ap Maredudd ap Dafydd has four references to her in two of his poems, 'Moliant Gwenhwyfar' (GGMDiii 3.20) and 'Serch gwrthodedig' (GGMDiii

4.21, 32, 33). Iolo Goch mentioned her in 'I ferch' (GIG XXIV.23), Mab Clochyddyn in 'Marwnad Gwenhwyfar wraig Hywel ap Tudur ap Gruffudd o Goedan' (GGrG 6.94), Rhisiardyn in 'Moliant Myfanwy wraig Goronwy Fychan ap Tudur o Benmynydd' (GSRh 5.36), and Sefnyn in 'Moliant Goronwy Fychan ap Tudur o Benmynydd' (GSRh 3.8).

These references by 14th century poets unanimously touch on one element of Eigr's characteristics, that is, her beauty. After c.1400, beauty is still the chief value that she represents, but the allusions grew a little more diverse. The following list shows that although in HRB Eigr's role is more or less secondary to that of Uthr, her popularity among 15th century and early 16th century poet is greater than that of her husband in the story.

References to Eigr by *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* c.1400-c.1525:

Dafydd ab Edmwnd: 'Cywydd i gynghori merch na phriodai neb onis cai ef hi' (GDE IX.13)

-----: [untitled poem in Cardiff MS11] (GDE XXXVIII.55, 67)

Dafydd ap Hywel Swrdwal: 'Moliant Dafydd ap Hywel o Lanbryn-Mair' (GHS 34.37)

Dafydd Nanmor: 'I ddyfalu bun' (PWDN XXXIII.26)

Gruffudd Llwyd: 'I Eiddig a'i wraig' (GGLI 4.41)

-----: 'Ymddiddan â merch dan ei phared' (GGLI At.ii.8)

Gutun Owain: 'Marwnad Dafydd Llwyd ap Tudur o Fordidris' (OPGO XLI.19)

-----: 'I Tomas Salbri Ieuan' (OPGO LVIII.38)

Hywel Dafi: 'Moliant merch lygadlas' (GHD 107.19)

Ieuan ap Rhydderch: 'I wallt merch' (GIRh 1.5)

Ieuan Deulwyn: 'I ferch a'i gwallt' (CWID V.11)

Ieuan Dyfi: 'I olrhain Anni Goch' (GHCLI 57.58)

Ieuan Llwyd Brydydd: 'Gofyn tarw gan Hywel ab Ieuan ap Rhys Gethin dros Ddafydd ap Hywel' (GILIF 12.22)

Iorwerth Fynglwyd: 'Llyma osteg a wnaeth Iorwerth i haeru i ysbryd Deicyn ysbaddu Lang Lewys' (GIF 39.4)

Lewys Daron: 'Gofyn main melin gan dair wraig o Fôn dros Fair o Nefyn' (GLDar 17.38)

-----, 'Moliant Maredudd ab Ieuan ap Robert, Dolwyddelan' (GLDar 20.45)

Lewys Glyn Cothi: 'Moliant Siôn ap Rhys ac Elsbedd' (GLGC 103.5)

-----: 'Moliant Ieuan ap Phylib' (GLGC 170.49)

-----: 'Moliant Phylib ap Rhys a Gwenllian' (GLGC187.26)

-----: 'I ofyn Arfwisg gan Rosier Cinast a'i Wraig dros Edwart ap Dafydd' (GLGC 207.18)

Lewys Môn: 'Gofyn paderau gan Ieuan ap Gwilym (Siôn Wilym)' (GLM XX.36)

-----, 'Marwnad Siôn ab Elis Eutun' (GLM LXXVI.65)

Llawdden: 'Moliant Phylib ap Rhys a Gwenllian o Genarth' (GLI 12.52)

-----: 'Ateb Llawdden' (GLI 33.28=GHS 32.28)

Llywelyn ab y Moel: 'I'r farf' (GSCyf13.4)

Maredudd ap Rhys: 'Cywydd y Fwyall' (GMRh 1.22)

-----: 'Cywydd i wraig ieuanc' (GMRh 22.50)

-----: 'Mawl i wraig a gogan i'w gŵr' (GMRh 23.17)

Mastr Harri ap Hywel: 'Gwallt aur merch' (GSPE 10.4)

Rhisiart ap Rhys: 'Marwnad Elsbeth Mathau o Radur' (GRhB 29.2)

Tudur Aled: 'Gem o wraig ar Gymry yw, moliant Margret ferch Gruffudd ap Rhys' (GTA XXXIX.87)

-----, 'Gair, wedi'r êl gŵr, a drig, moliant Rheinallt ap Gruffudd ap Hywel ab Einion' (GTA XLV.25)

-----, 'Planwydd pob haelioni, moliant i Rys ap Maredudd o'r Ysbyty ag i'w wraig, Lowri' (GTA LVIII.28)

-----, 'Trwsio'n gwrth rosyn o goed, i Wiliam ap Edwart, cwnstabl y Waun' (GTA LXIII.115)

-----, 'Marwnad Gruffudd ap Rhys ap Dafydd ap Hywel [a'i wraig]' (GTA LXXXVIII.60)

Tudur Penllyn: 'I Lowri, gwraig Rhys ap Maredudd' (GTP 13.43)

-----: 'Marwnad Mallt ferch Hywel Selau' (GTP 20.78)

-----: 'I Ddafydd ap Gwilym o Lwydiarth ym Môn, ac i ofyn cymod ei fam' (GTP 23.45)

Here we can see that along with the mainstream description of beauty (GDE

IX.13; GDE XXXVIII.67; GGLI At.ii.8; GILIF 12.22; GIRh 1.5; GLGC 187.26; GLI 33.28; GMRh 23.17; GSCyf 13.4; GSPE 10.4; GTA LVIII.28; GTP 13.43; GTP 20.78; GTP 23.45; OPGO XLI.19; PWDN XXXIII.26), and the episode in HRB (CWID V.11; GHCLI 57.58; GHD 107.19; GMRh 22.50), the name of Eigr is also joined with the concepts of nobility (GLI 12.52), hospitality (GMRh 1.22), gentleness (GGLI 4.41), mirthfulness (GDE XXXVIII.55) or with all these virtues embodied in the image of a single figure and made in a plain manner a parallel to the patroness praised or mourned (GHS 34.37; GLDar 17.38; GLDar 20.45; GLGC 103.5; GLGC 170.49; GLGC 207.18; GLM XX.36; GLM LXXVI.65; GRhB 29.2; GTA XXXIX.87; GTA XLV.25; GTA LXXXVIII.60; OPGO LVIII.38).

Iorwerth Fynglwyd's 'Llyma osteg a wnaeth Iorwerth i haeru i ysbryd Deicyn ysbaddu Lang Lewys' (GIF 39.4) is distinct from the rest of the poems in the group by its genre. It is a satire poem (*dychan*), while all the others (including those by earlier poets of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*) are either eulogy and elegy or love poem or else request poem (*gofyn*). The poet says to the object of the sarcasm that 'Pan ddicion, feirwon, am fwriaw gordderch / a gâi gerddaw danaw, / diryfedd, drwy fawredd draw, / a fedd Eigr, i fyw digiaw.' The story in HRB is certainly part of the background, but the main point installs a humorous light air to the poem and no allusion in it should be taken too seriously.

Going through these references, it gives the impression that during the 15th century the image of Eigr gradually walked out of the frame set by Geoffrey's work and became a classical symbol to represent the ideal of a noble woman in every

respect. During this process the Arthurian connection that came with Geoffrey's account was correspondently diluted. In this way we might say that Eigr is a typical example of an Arthurian character detached from the original Arthurian context and become a general figure representing a certain kind of virtue.

3.2. Arthur's friends and foes

3.2.1. Cai

Cai is perhaps the one major Arthurian character about whom we know most. 'Pa gur' is more of a praise of Cai's exploits than of Arthur's own. The two fragments of the dialogue poem between Arthur, Melwas, Gwenhwyfar and possibly Cai play on the same string. Cai's presence is by no means negligible in the Three Romances, not to mention his more prominent role in *Culhwch ac Olwen*. Even in the story of *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy* where the mood of satire is full to the brim, Cai is not the subject of some harmless byway caricature, contrary to our expectations perhaps. Instead, he is presented in a completely favourable air as the fairest man of Arthur's court and as one who holds a reputable office there, although as Peter Noble notes, he has no real role in the tale.¹³⁵

The triads speak of him as one of the 'Three Diademed Battle-leaders of the

¹³⁵ See Peter Noble, 'The Heroic Tradition of Kei', *Reading Medieval Studies* 14 (1988), 131-2.

Island of Britain' (TYP⁴ Triad 21), a close participant in Arthur's aborted enterprise to snatch pigs from Trystan (the White Book and Red Book version of triad 26). Cai appears in two of Welsh Saints' Lives (together with Bedwyr) as Arthur's close companion, especially in the Life of Cadog, where he stopped Arthur from following his lecherous thought and doing something that would stain his reputation. In this regard Cai has a higher moral code than Arthur, yet since the purpose of the hagiography is to picture Arthur as a secular king engaged deeply in earthly deeds and form a contrast to the saint, it is not strange to see others in Arthur's retinue embellished as a better man than Arthur himself. Therefore in my opinion this description need not be taken as being characteristic of Cai.

In *Culhwch ac Olwen* the storyteller tells us: 'Cai had magical qualities. For nine nights and nine days he could hold his breath under water. For nine nights and nine days he could go without sleep. A wound from Cai's sword no physician could heal. Cai was clever. He could be as tall as the tallest tree in the forest when it pleased him. There was another strange thing about him. When the rain was at its heaviest, whatever was in his hand would remain dry (and for a hand-breadth above and below), so great was his heat. And when his companions were coldest, this would be kindling for them to light a fire.'¹³⁶ Another description made by his father Cynyr contains an apparently contradictory element that Cai's heart would be always cold and there would be no warmth in his hands.¹³⁷ Regarding this, if we don't wish to accept this as a fallacy in the narrative, the explanation made by Linda Gowans

¹³⁶ CO, ll. 384-92, Mab., p.189.

¹³⁷ CO, ll. 266-7; Mab., p. 186.

seems to be the most persuasive to me. She points out that "'ice-hearted" is one of the phrases used in Celtic story to describe a firm and resolute warrior' and that it is used in Irish traditional stories to describe CuChulainn and Cet son of Magu as well.¹³⁸

In the first half of *Culhwch ac Olwen*, Cai is very active indeed. He was the one who kicked off the entire adventure when Arthur was still hesitating and weighing about the possible profit and loss of the exploit. Then until the time Arthur sang the englyn and hurt his feelings, he was the actual leader of the action. Many of us would be impressed of his quick mind and reaction when we see him throwing a timely log between the arms of Custennin's wife to avoid the embrace that would squeeze him into a twist. In the Three Romances a comic element is added to his personality, and he is purposefully depicted as being impetuously proud and enjoy attacking unrecognised knights rashly, an opposite to Gwalchmai's courteous and polite way of dealing with strangers. Notwithstanding, his image is still overallly a positive one.

Cai has always been a favourite figure of the Welsh poets from the early medieval period. Although there are only two references to him in the works of *Beirdd y Tywysogion*, they are both representative of poets' knowledge of him and attitude towards him.

Elidir Sais in 'Marwnad Ednyfed Fychan a Thegwared ab Iarddur' (CBT I18.18) mentions 'arfod Cai a Bedwyr' (the stroke of Cai and Bedwyr), referring to their

¹³⁸ Linda Gowans, *Cei and the Arthurian Legend* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1988), p. 13.

military feats obviously. This is one of the few examples where the names of Cai and Bedwyr are alluded to in the same line of a poem.

The other is by Cynddelw in 'Marwnad Owain Gwynedd', reiterating in verse the Dillus Barfog episode in Culhwch ac Olwen (CBT IV4.205-8), already discussed in the Introduction.

Beirdd yr Uchelwyr seemed to favour the name of Cai much more than *Beirdd y Tywysogion*. Up to c.1400 there are 17 references to him altogether:

Anonymous: 'Moliant tri mab' (GLIBH 10.3)

Casnodyn: 'Dychan i Drahaearn Brydydd Mawr' (GC 11.144)

Dafydd ap Gwilym: 'Dychan i Rys Meigen' (DGnet 31.53)

-----: 'Yr Ehedydd' (DGnet 44.13)

Dafydd y Coed: 'Moliant Rhydderch ab Ieuan Llwyd o Lyn Aeron' (GDC 1.9)

-----: 'Moliant Hopgyn ap Tomas o Ynysforgan' (GDC 3.47, 142)

Gruffudd ap Maredudd ap Dafydd: 'Moliant Tudur Fychan ap Goronwy o Dre Castell a Phenmynydd' (GGMDi 3.179)

-----: 'Moliant Goronwy Fychan ap Tudur o Benmynydd' (GGMDi 4.42)

Gruffudd Gryg: 'I'r lleuad' (GGGr 6.67)

Hillyn: 'Moliant Ieuan Llwyd o Lyn Aeron' (GLIBH 5.1)

Iolo Goch: 'Marwnad Syr Rhys' (GIG VII.9)

-----: 'Achau Owain Glyndŵr' (GIG VIII.94)

Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig Hen: 'Moliant Dafydd ap Cadwaladr o Fachelltref'
(GLIG 1.23)

Meurig ab Iorwerth: 'Moliant Hopgyn ap Tomas o Ynysforgan' (GDC 13.74)

Rhisierdyn, 'Moliant Hwlcyn ap Hywel o Brysaeddfed' (GSRh 8.47)

Trahaearn Brydydd Mawr: 'Marwnad Hywel o Landingad yn Ystrad Tywi'
(GGDT 11.25)

In these works Cai is referred to as having the following attributes:

As a powerful or mighty figure: DGnet 31.53; GLIBH 5.1; as a distinguished soldier: GDC 1.9; GGMDi 3.179; as a provider of food and drink and as a gift giver: GDC 13.74; GSRh 8.47; referred to in a direct comparison: GGMDi 4.42; GIG VIII.94; GLIBH 10.3; his physical size or height: GC 11.144; GDC 3.47; his strength: GLIG 1.23; his wisdom: GGDT 11.25; his decisiveness: GIG VII.9; his ability to fly: DGnet 44.13; GGGr 6.67; his two qualities: GDC 3.142.

The references to Cai are interesting in 'Moliant Hopgyn ap Tomas o Ynysforgan' (GDC 3). In line 47 the poet says: 'Coron yw Hopgyn, cywiw wryd - Cai', which seems to refer to the unusual height that Cai could make himself into, according to the record in *Culhwch ac Olwen*, as well as the span of his outstretched arms, including the hands, which is known to be extraordinarily long.¹³⁹ Another reference in line 142 mentions 'Buan ddwygamp Cai, boneddigaidd.' The line can be understood as '[he has] the swift quality twice that of Cai, a blessed one', as the

¹³⁹ The name of the stream Nant Gwryd in the Snowdonia area reflects this idea. According to a local tale, Cai is able to cover the width of the stream when he stretches out his arms, thus the name of the brook. See Ifor Williams, *Enwau Lleoedd* (Liverpool, 1962), p. 32-3.

editor suggests in the modern Welsh paraphrase, or as '[he has] the two swift qualities of Cai, a blessed one'. If we take the latter reading, it would look very likely to be the two (or two kinds of) qualities mentioned in *Culhwch ac Olwen* that the poet was thinking of here. We know that the range of types and themes in Dafydd y Coed's poetry is very wide, and this would be another testimony to the diversity of his work, or at least to his knowledge of the tale of *Culhwch ac Olwen* and thus a proof that this part of the story existed then in the second half of the 14th century in the same form as we see it nowadays.

'Tr lleuad' (GGGr 6) is even more interesting, because it seems to refer to Cai's ability to fly! The poem is highly entertaining in its own right, describing an unpleasant journey, very likely to be a trip to or back from Santiago de Compostela, and venting complaint about rain and wind and coldness of April with a mocking tone, which gives a vivid portrayal of the poor poet suffering the awful weather.¹⁴⁰ The reference to Cai appears towards the end of the poem, where the poet calls for the moon of April to give way to the moon of May which would bring agreeable weather. The line reads 'A Mai, hutGai ehetoed', whereby Cai has a kind of magical power which enables him to fly over the top of the woods. In *Culhwch ac Olwen*, as mentioned above, Cai is said to be able to make himself as tall as the tallest tree of the forest, yet this is not an ability to fly. Also as the editor notes Dafydd ap Gwilym has a similar allusion in his *llatai* poem 'Yr Ehedydd' (The Skylark), where Dafydd describes the skylark as having Cai's attribute ('Fry yr ai, iawnGai angerdd')

¹⁴⁰ For the background of the poem see editor's note, GGGr, pp. 157-8.

(DGnet44.13). The editor mentions the quality attributed to him in *Culhwch ac Olwen*,¹⁴¹ yet considering the image of a bird, it is equally possible that the attribute referred to here is the ability of flying. Therefore I tend to speculate that there was originally some kind of story relating to Cai flying somewhere, probably in oral circulation on a folklore level within a certain region around the middle of the 14th century, and was thus known to Dafydd ap Gwilym and Gruffudd Gryg, but it never had the luck to be written down and passed into oblivion in the end.

Cai's name remains quite popular between c.1400 and c.1525:

Dafydd Epynt: 'I Wiliam Herbert o Grolbrwg' (GDEp 10.48, as 'Cai Hir')

Gruffudd Llwyd: 'Moliant i farf Owain ap Maredudd o'r Neuadd-wen ym Mhowys' (GGL1 16.37=IGE² XLIII.37)

Gwilym ab Ieuan Hen: 'Cywydd gofyn dau filgi gan Ddafydd Llwyd ap Llywelyn ap Gruffudd' (GDID XI.44)

Guto'r Glyn: 'Moliant i Phylib ap Gwilym Llwyd o Drefgwnter' (GGlnet 30.10, as 'Cai Hir')

Huw Cae Llwyd: 'Moliant Dafydd Fychan o Linwent ym Maelienydd' (GHCLI XXIII.24, as 'Cai Hir')

Hywel Dafi: 'Moliant Tomas Fychan ap Syr Rhoser Fychan' (GHD 48.36, as 'Cai Hir')

-----, 'Moliant Siôn ap Pilstwn Hen ap Siôn ap Madog' (GHD 83.46)

¹⁴¹ See DGnet 44.13n. This is also the opinion of Linda Gowans, see her *Cei and the Arthurian Legend*, p. 129.

Ieuan ap Tudur Penllyn: 'I ofyn cleddau i Ieuan ap Gruffudd ap Cynfrig o Ffriwlwyd dros Ieuan ap Robert ap Meredudd o Eifionydd' (GTP 45.51, as 'Cai Hir')

Iorwerth Fynglwyd: 'I Syr Siôn Raglan' (GIF 16.34)

Lewys Daron: 'Moliant Maredudd ab Ieuan ap Robert, Dolwyddelan' (GLDar 20.2, as 'Cai Hir', 32)

-----, 'Marwnad Maredudd ab Ieuan ap Robert, Dolwyddelan' (GLDar 21.14)

Lewys Glyn Cothi: 'I ofyn March gan Wilym ap Morgan a Rhys Owbre' (GLGC 33.15, as 'Cai Hir')

-----: 'Moliant Syr Wiliam Herbert' (GLGC 112.8, as 'Syr Cai Hir')

-----: 'Moliant Meibion Syr Tomas Fychan' (GLGC 131.70, as 'Cai Hir')

-----: 'Moliant Siôn ab Ieuan' (GLGC 158.36, as 'Cai fab hen Gynyr'; 37, as 'Cai Hir')

Lewys Môn: 'Moliant Owain ap Meurig' (GLM VIII.9)

-----, 'Moliant Owain ap Meurig ac yntau'n glaf' (GLM IX.46)

-----, 'Moliant Maredudd ab Ifan ap Robert' (GLM XLVIII.10, as 'Cai Hir')

-----, 'Moliant Syr Tomas Salbri' (GLM LVII.63, as 'Cai Hir')

-----, 'Moliant Wiliam Edwart' (GLM LXXIV.57, as 'Cai Hir')

-----, 'Cymod gwŷr Caereinion' (GLM LXXXI.24, as 'Cai Hir')

Llywelyn ab y Moel: 'Ateb cyntaf Llywelyn ab y Moel i Rys Goch Eryri' (GSCyf 14.16)

Owain ap Llywelyn ab y Moel: 'Moliant Edwart ap Hywel o'r Faenor' (GOLIM 13.21, as 'Cai Hir')

Tudur Aled: 'Gwin dy iaith gan y doethion, cywydd i Ffwg Salbri, deon Llanelwy' (GTA XVIII.66)

-----, 'Crino dyn yw cronni da, cywydd i Reinallt ap Gruffudd ap Rhys' (GTA XL40, 42)

-----, 'Gŵr o ddysg ag o radd wyt, cywydd i Robert ap Rhys' (GTA XLIX.13)

-----, 'Mathrafal, i Syr Risiart Herbart' (GTA LXI.74, as 'Cai ap Cynyr')

-----, 'Yno y tyf enaid Dafydd, marwnad Dafydd ap Hywel ap Gruffudd ab Ednyfed o Nanheudwy' (GTA XC.4, as 'Cai Hir', 52)

-----, 'Eryr Bodeon, marwnad Owain ap Meurig o Fodeon ym Môn' (GTA XCII.5)

Tudur Penllyn: 'I Dafydd ap Siancyn' (GTP 1.2, as 'Cai Hir')

Around half of the above references are general parallels between the object of the poem and the name of Cai (GHCLI XXIII.24; GHD 48.36; GIF 16.34; GLGC 33.15; GLGC 112.8; GLGC 131.70; GLGC 158.36, 37; GLM IX.46; GLM LVII.63; GLM LXXIV.57; GTA XLIX.13; GTA LXI.74; GTA XCII.5), or else refer to him as a standard of a warrior (GLM VIII.9; GLM LVII.63; GOLIM 13.21; GTP 45.51), a big man (GLDar 20.2; GLDar 21.14; GTA XC.52) a strong person (GGLI 16.37; GLDar 20.32) and a prosperous person (GDID XI.44), or his office as the steward in Arthur's court (GDEp 10.48; GHD 83.46;). Lewys Môn seems to be the only poet who probably sees Cai sometimes in a negative light. His reference in GLM LXXXI.24 refers to 'asau Cai Hir'. It would be so if we take the word 'asau' as a

variant of 'aswy' (left-handed, sinister, but can also be used as a derived noun) rather than the plural form of 'asen' (bone, rib).

The noteworthy point in Guto'r Glyn's reference (GGlnet 30.10) is that he relates Cai's name to the Wye Valley (Dyffryn Gwy). The reference to Cai by Llywelyn ab y Moel (GSCyf 14.16) is one of the few that draws upon the relationship between Cai and Bedwyr.

Tudur Aled mentions that Cai was crowned once (GTA XVIII.66). No record of this can be found in the Welsh tradition of Cai, therefore, if we are thinking of external influences, it must be attributed to the continental Arthurian tradition. However, as it seems that no major work of continental Arthurian romance talks about this either, I wonder if it comes from some oral folktales, or even could it have been the poet's invention? He also mentions once of Cai attacking Aber Ceiriog (GTA XC.4). The place name appears in *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*,¹⁴² but in that tale it is not especially associated with Cai, therefore perhaps Tudur Aled knew about some local tales that we don't know? He did know the tales we know as well, anyway, for he speaks of Cai beating the dwarf and receiving the revenge - anyone who has read *Peredur* can recognise the allusion.

Tudur Penllyn's reference to Cai (GTP1.2) echoes the one made by Gruffudd Gryg in the previous century in drawing a connection between Cai and the forest: 'Cai Hir y coed ir a'r dail'. It is possible that the possible story discussed above was still in circulation during the second half of the 15th century, although it might be

¹⁴² BR, p. 1.22.

equally possible that there was another story of Cai and the forest without him being able to fly. One of Lewys Môn's references (GLM XLVIII.10) points to the same possibility.

From the above list we can also see that 'Cai Hir' seems to be an established epithet of him, and although his name is slightly less popular than in the previous century, his was continued to be thought of by the poets as a positive figure.

3.2.2. Bedwyr

Compared to Cai's conspicuous position in native Welsh Arthurian tradition, Bedwyr is always secondary, and far less 'noisy'. When their names are mentioned together, it is always 'Cai and Bedwyr' and never 'Bedwyr and Cai', suggesting his auxiliary role to Cai. This does not mean that he is not important, however, for Cai regards him as his closest friend. Each time that Cai wants to express his amazement or disagreement, he begins with 'by the hand of my friend',¹⁴³ and the two are often seen together cooperating in the same task. Bedwyr is a man of few words. Except his brief conversation with Cai in *Culhwch ac Olwen* about what to do with Dillus Barfog,¹⁴⁴ he is literally silent in all of the early Welsh Arthurian sources in which he is found. Nonetheless, he is a man capable of action. In *Culhwch ac Olwen* he steps to the foreground when Cai was irritated by Arthur's nonsense englyn and left the team, and helps Arthur accomplish several important deeds in the second half of

¹⁴³ See for example CO, ll. 134, 957, and *Owein*, ll. 224-5.

¹⁴⁴ CO, ll. 953-69; Mab., p. 206.

the story.¹⁴⁵ In 'Pa gur' Bedwyr is given the epithet 'bedrydant'.¹⁴⁶ Although the exact meanings of these words are still open to discussion,¹⁴⁷ the intent of these lines is clear, that is, to praise Bedwyr's skill of fighting. His presence in the Life of Cadog and the Life of Carannog are not indispensable concerning the function of the narrative, since Cai takes the main acting part, yet perhaps the hagiographers saw it better to keep the traditional pair of friends together in their works.

We do not get a lot of characteristics of Bedwyr from the native Welsh Arthurian sources. From the triads (the same two in which Cai is mentioned) we know that he is a better diademed leader of battle than the three, and he also took part in Arthur's attempt to get hold of Trystan's pigs.¹⁴⁸ The fullest description of Bedwyr's qualities is to be found in *Culhwch ac Olwen*: 'There was this about Bedwyr -- no one was as handsome as he in this Island except Arthur and Drych son of Cibddar. And this, too, that though he was one-handed, no three warriors could draw blood in the same field faster than he. Another peculiar quality of his -- there was one thrust in his spear, and nine counter-thrusts.'¹⁴⁹ This image is well reflected to in the works of medieval Welsh poets, as there are only two basic elements in it: handsomeness and excellence as a warrior.

Bedwyr is mentioned twice in the works of *Beirdd y Tywysogion*. Beside the one by Cynddelw where his name appears together with that of Cai's (CBT I18.18),

¹⁴⁵ For the scenes in which Bedwyr is a main acting character, see Appendix.

¹⁴⁶ LIDC 31.47, 58.

¹⁴⁷ Rachel Bromwich has a brief summary of it in TYP⁴, pp. 286-7.

¹⁴⁸ TYP⁴, triads 21 and 26WR.

¹⁴⁹ CO, ll. 394-8; Mab., pp. 189-90.

Bleddyn Fardd referred to him in 'Marwnad Dafydd ap Gruffudd ab Owain' (CBT VII55.19), regarding him as a paragon of bravery and manhood.

References to Bedwyr by *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* up to c.1400:

Casnodyn: 'Marwnad Madog Fychan o Dir Iarll' (GC 2.21)

Dafydd y Coed: 'Moliant Rhydderch ab Ieuan Llwyd o Lyn Aeron' (GDC 1.22)

Gruffudd ap Maredudd ap Dafydd: 'Moliant Tudur Fychan ap Goronwy o Dreicastell a Phenmynydd' (GGMDi 3.202)

Ieuan Llwyd ab y Gargam: 'Moliant Hopgyn ap Tomas o Ynysforgan' (GDC 12.30)

Iolo Goch: 'I'r Brenin Edward y Trydydd' (GIG I.2)

Rhys Goch Eryri: 'Cywydd yn galw am adfer Gwynedd' (GRhGE 12.45)

All these five references are direct comparisons, with Bedwyr as a standard of bravery.

Bedwyr in works of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* c.1400-c.1525:

Dafydd Epynt: 'I ofyn gŵn gan Risiart Herbert' (GSPE 11.18)

Hywel Cilan: 'Moliant i feibion Iorwerth ab Ieuan o'r Waun' (GHCil XXI.31)

Hywel Dafi: 'Moliant Brycheiniog' (GHD 59.61)

-----, 'Awdl foliant i Domas Gwyn ap Siancyn' (GHD 85.43)

Lewys Glyn Cothi: 'I ofyn March gan Wilym ap Morgan a Rhys Owbre' (GLGC 33.4)

-----: 'Marwnad Tomas Fychan ap Tomas' (GLGC 77.36)

-----: 'Moliant Wiliam Herbert' (GLGC 111.57, as 'hen Fedwyr')

-----: 'Moliant Henri ab Ieuan Fychan' (GLGC 156.11)

-----: 'Moliant Siôn ab Ieuan' (GLGC 158.40)

-----: 'Marwnad Dau Fab Phylib ap Rhys' (GLGC 189.31)

-----: 'Moliant Dafydd Goch ap Hywel' (GLGC 190.22, as 'hen Fedwyr')

Llywelyn ab y Moel: 'Ateb cyntaf Llywelyn ab y Moel i Rys Goch Eryri'
(GSCyf 14.16)

Tudur Aled: 'Mathrafal, i Syr Risiart Herbart' (GTA LXI.69, as 'Syr Bedwyr')

Tudur Penllyn: 'Marwnad Mallt ferch Hywel Selau' (GTP 20.66)

-----: 'I Ddafydd ap Gwilym o Lwydiarth ym Môn, ac i ofyn cymod ei fam'
(GTP 23.28)

The references to Bedwyr in this period basically continue in the direction of the previous century. He is referred to as a standard of warrior: GHD 59.61; GLGC 33.4; GLGC 111.57; GTP 23.28; for his agreeableness: GLGC 190.22; as a leader of his soldiers: GLGC 77.36; GLGC 189.31; or in direct comparison: GHCil XXI.31; GLGC 156.11; GLGC 158.40. The reference in GTA LXI.69 is unmistakably made with the background of *Y Seint Greal*, for some other names exclusively found in *Y Seint Greal* are in the same stanza. The context of the allusion in GHD 85.43 is not very clear, but it probably refers to YSG.

The context of the reference in GTP 20.66 is rather vague as well. The poet

seems to be commemorating the generosity of the patroness, saying that she descended from the lineage of Ynyr (probably Ynyr Gwent, but again this is not testified), and that Bedwyr is like her in her courtesy (Hael iawn a fu hi mewn heolau, / Hil Ynyr, Bedwyr ei gwybodau). Dafydd Epynt made the same usage (GSPE 11.17-18, 'Ennill a'u dwyn a wnai 'll dau /Air Bedwyr a'i wybodau'), showing that Bedwyr is regarded as being distinctive of his courtesy by some poets in the second half of the 15th century. This characteristic may again draw on the image of Bedwyr in YSG, yet no conclusion can be obtained from the context of the two poems themselves.

3.2.3. Gwalchmai

Gwalchmai is unquestionably one of the most significant characters in Arthurian literature in many languages in the Middle Ages, particularly in Middle English. He is Arthur's nephew and one of his closest companions in every text composed in various languages (not only *Culhwch ac Olwen* and the Three Romances), indicating that he belongs to the Arthurian tradition from the earliest stage of its development. In *Culhwch ac Olwen*, however, he plays no role in the story. In my opinion this reference can actually be ascribed to some kind of external influences, but it does not have to be from Geoffrey, for the triad tradition and other fragmentary sources show that there might have been enough oral tales about him to earn him a place in the early Welsh Arthurian encyclopedia *Culhwch ac Olwen*.

Englynion y Beddau mentions that 'the grave of Gwalchmai in Peryddon, / as a disgrace [or reproach] to men',¹⁵⁰ hinting at some sort of story about Gwalchmai's death, killed through the treachery of his enemy or his own men, we may infer, but no such story has survived in Welsh Arthurian prose narratives. The triads introduce him as one of the 'Three Well-Endowed Men of the Island of Britain',¹⁵¹ and one of the 'Three Golden-Tongued knights' of Arthur's court, with his patronym given as 'ap Llew ap Cynfarch', thus making him a first cousin to Owain.¹⁵² In the Three Romances he is the embodiment of courtesy, the mediator, the peacemaker, and the master of diplomatic speech. In *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy* his presence is only his name in the list of Arthur's council towards the end of the story, yet at least it suggests that the author of *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy* was familiar with the Arthurian connection of the character Gwalchmai.

Looking side by side at the Welsh tradition of Gwalchmai and the continental tradition of him, it is not difficult to find that he is slightly less significant in the Welsh Arthurian narratives than he is in continental romances. This tendency found its correspondence in medieval Welsh poetry, in which Gwalchmai does not appear to be more popular than other Arthurian figures until the middle of the 15th century.

There are two allusions in the works of *Beirdd y Tywysogion* which we can be sure to be referring to Gwalchmai ap Gwyar and not Gwalchmai ap Meilyr the poet. Cynddelw describes Owain Gwynedd as 'taerfalch fal Gwalchmai' in his 'Marwnad

¹⁵⁰ EB 8.1-2. John K. Bollard notes that the exact location of Peryddon is so far unidentified. See EB, p. 70.

¹⁵¹ TYP⁴, triad 4.

¹⁵² 'The Twenty-Four Knights of Arthur's Court', TYP⁴, App.IV.1.

Owain Gwynedd' (CBT IV4.182), praising the bravery or dignity of the two, and Y Prydydd Bychan in his 'Marwnad Rhys Ieuanc' (CBT VII2.15) says of the latter that he has the nature (*cynneddf*) of Gwalchmai.

Beirdd yr Uchelwyr of the 14th century speak of him a little bit more than their predecessors. There are six references to him, including a poem whose author is unknown:

Anonymous: 'Moliant tri mab' (GLIBH 10.2)

Casnodyn: 'Marwnad Madog Fychan o Dir Iarll' (GC 2.145)

Dafydd y Coed: 'Moliant Hopgyn ap Tomas o Ynysforgan' (GDC 3.101)

Einion Offeiriad: 'Moliant Syr Rhys ap Gruffudd' (GEO 1.34, 63)

Hillyn: 'Moliant Ieuan Llwyd o Lyn Aeron' (GLIBH 5.4)

Iorwerth ab y Cyriog: 'Marwnad Einion ap Seisyll o Fathafarn' (GGrG At.i.41)

The reference in GC 2.145 is interesting because it seems to suggest that Gwalchmai was brought up by drinking mead and wine: 'Difai fal Gwalchmai gweilch maeth medd - a gwin'. In other references Gwalchmai is mentioned as an ideal of warrior: GGrG At.i.41; GLIBH 10.2; as a perfect ideal man in every aspect: GC 2.145; GDC 3.101; GEO 1.34, 63; and for his supermacy: GLIBH 5.4. The two 'giants' in poetry of the 14th century, namely, Dafydd ap Gwilym and Iolo Goch, were both silent about him.

The period c.1400-c.1525 witnesses an explosive growth of instances in which poets talk about him. He is alluded to more than once by nearly all the most important poets of this period: Guto'r Glyn has 11 references of him, Lewys Glyn Cothi has five, Dafydd Nanmor three (once under the form 'Gawen'), Dafydd ab Edmwnd one, Tudur Aled seven times (with two shown as 'Syr Gawen'), and Lewys Môn, the one who seems to favour him the most (even more than Arthur), mentions him 15 times in the forms of 'Gwalchmai', 'nai Arthur', 'Gwalchmai ap Gwyar', 'Syr Gwalchmai' and 'Syr Gawen'. The list excludes the instances where the name shows as 'Syr Gawen' or 'Syr Gawain' where references in that form clearly present the influence of continental tradition and are thus not within the scope of the current study, while including those whose context is not very clear:

Dafydd ab Edmwnd: 'Cywydd i ofyn cŵn i Robert ap Dafydd ap Robert o Nanheudwy' (GDE LVIII.29)

Dafydd Llwyd o Fathafarn: 'Cywydd marwnad i Ddafydd Llwyd ap Syr Gruffudd Fychan a foddodd wrth neidio o'r llong i dir' (GDLI 58.49)

Dafydd Nanmor: 'I Domas ap Rhys o'r Tywyn' (PWDN VIII.41 [as 'Syr Gawen'], 68)

-----: 'I Rys ap Llywelyn o Landygwy' (PWDN XII.35)

Deio ab Ieuan Du: 'Marwnad Lewys ap Maredudd ab Ieuan Fychan o Lanwrin' (GDID 13.35)

Gruffudd ap Tudur ap Hywel: 'Nychdod bardd gan Ruffudd ap Tudur ap Hywel'

(CYS DT 12.75)

Guto'r Glyn: 'Awdl foliant i'r Abad Rhys ap Dafydd o Ystrad-fflur' (GGlnet 8.60)

-----: 'Moliant i Rys ap Siancyn o Lyn-nedd' (GGlnet 15.16)

-----: 'Moliant i Syr Wiliam ap Tomas o Raglan' (GGlnet 19.28)

-----: 'Moliant i law arian Siôn Dafî' (GGlnet 41.16)

-----: 'Gofyn gwalch gan Huw Bwlchai ap Wiliam Bwlchai o Fiwmares ar ran Rhisiart Cyffin ab Ieuan Llwyd deon Bangor' (GGlnet 60.7)

-----: 'Moliant i Syr Siôn Bwrch ap Huw Bwrch o'r Drefrudd' (GGlnet 80.26)

-----: 'Moliant i Faredudd ap Hywel o Groesoswallt' (GGlnet 95.59,61)

Gutun Owain: 'Cywydd i ofyn bwled dros Wmffre Cinast i Ruffydd ap Howel ap Morgan' (OPGO XV.5)

-----: 'Cywydd moliant i Elisau ap Gruffydd ab Einion' (OPGO XLII.7)

Gwilym ab Ieuan Hen: 'Cywydd gofyn am bais o faels gan Ddafydd ap Gruffudd o Abermarlais i Ddafydd Llwyd' (GDID VIII.20)

-----, 'Cywydd gofyn dau filgi gan Ddafydd Llwyd ap Llywelyn ap Gruffudd' (GDID XI.44)

-----, 'Moliant Hywel Amhadog o Fochnant' (GDID XIII.4, as 'nai Arthur')¹⁵³

-----, 'Marwnad Dafydd ap Tomas a moliant ei bum mab' (GDID XVII.40)

Hywel Dafî: 'Moliant Maredudd ap Morgan ap Dafydd Gam' (GHD 24.5)

¹⁵³ According to the editor, it is also possible that Peredur is the one referred to in this poem. See editor's note, GDID, p. 154. I take the reading as referring to Gwalchmai out of the consideration that there are three other references to Gwalchmai but none to Peredur, yet it should be noted that it is only a tentative reading.

-----, 'Moliant Tomas Fychan ap Syr Rhoser Fychan' (GHD 48.33)

-----, 'Moliant Gwilym ap Tomas ap Gwilym' (GHD 77.32, not named but referred to as Arthur's nephew)

Hywel Swrdwal: 'Awdl i foliant Rhosier Fychan' (GHS 2.56)

Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal: 'I ddiolch i Syr Rhisiart Gethin am hugan gan Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal' (GHS 24.16)

Iorwerth Fynglwyd: 'I Siors Herbert' (GIF 9.8)

-----: 'I Risiart Herbert o Euas' (GIF 10.43, as 'mab Wyar')

-----: 'I Syr Wiliam Bawdrem' (GIF 28.73)

Lewys Daron: 'Moliant Pirs Conwy, Archiagon Llanelwy' (GLDar 24.13)

Lewys Glyn Cothi: 'Awdl foliant Syr Wiliam Herbert' (GLGC 112.50, 108)

-----: 'Awdl foliant Siôn ab Ieuan' (GLGC 158.35, as 'mab Gwyar')

-----: 'Moliant Dafydd Goch ap Meredudd' (GLGC 173.26)

-----: 'Moliant Nicolas ap Gruffudd a Sisli' (GLGC 210.15)

Lewys Môn: 'Moliant Owain ap Meurig' (GLM VIII.27-8)

-----, 'Marwnad Rhys ap Cynfrig' (GLM XIII.23)

-----, 'Marwnad Llywelyn ap Tudur' (GLM XXVII.42)

-----, 'Awdl briodas Siân Pilstwn' (GLM XLI.18, as 'Syr Gwalchmai', 62)

-----, 'Moliant Syr Tomas Salbri' (GLM LVII.17)

-----, 'Marwnad Elisau ap Gruffudd' (GLM LXIX.8= GTA LXXXIX.8)¹⁵⁴

-----, 'Moliant Siôn Pilstwn hen' (GLM LXXI.33)

¹⁵⁴ One manuscript attributes this poem to Tudur Aled, and this is why it appears in GTA, however since all the other manuscripts have Lewys Môn's name on it, we can be sure that the latter is the author. See editor's note, GLM, p.486.

-----, 'Cymod Siôn Pilstwn hen' (GLM LXXII.47)

-----, 'Marwnad Siôn ab Elis Eutun' (GLM LXXVI.8, as 'nai Arthur')

-----, 'Moliant Syr Rhisiart Herbart' (GLM LXXXVI.61)

-----, 'I ferch' (GLM XCV.29)

-----, 'I wraig gŵr arall' (GLM XCVII.15)

Llawdden: 'I ddiolch i Weurful ferch Madog o Abertanad am baun a pheunes ac i ofyn paun gan ei gŵr Gruffudd a hithau dros Ddafydd Llwyd o'r Drenwydd' (GLI 8.30)

-----: 'I ofyn gwalch gan Robert Chwitnai o swydd Henffordd dros Siôn Bromwych' (GLI 24.13)

Maredudd ap Rhys: 'Cywydd i Ifan ap Tudur o Lanufudd i ddiolch am y rhwyd' (GMRh 8.30)

Owain Waed Da: 'Mawl Madog ab Ieuan ab Einion' (GMB 16.52)

Syr Dafydd Trefor: 'I ddangos fyrred oes dyn' (GSDT 16.13)

-----, 'I ofyn alarch gan Faredudd ap Tomas o Borthaml dros Ddafydd ap Gwilym gan Syr Dafydd Trefor' (CYSdT 3.19)

Tudur Aled: 'Marw marchog, awdl farwnad Syr Thomas Salbri' (GTA X.67)

-----, 'Cywydd y pum brawd, i feibion Siôn Salbri' (GTA XXIII.32)

-----, 'Cyngor i anturiwr, cywydd i Robert Salbri o Ial' (GTA LXVII.49, as 'Syr Gwalchmai')

-----, 'Truan mor wan yw'r Einion, marwnad Dafydd ab Einion Fychan o Lanelwy' (GTA XCV.17)

Tudur Penllyn: 'I Wiliam Fychan o'r Penrhyn a'r Gaer yn Arfon' (GTP 5.53)

-----: 'I gymodi Hywel ap Gruffudd ap Siancyn a Hywel ap Gruffudd Derwas'
(GTP 22.2)

-----: 'I Ddafydd ap Gwilym o Lwydiarth ym Môn, ac i ofyn cymod ei fam'
(GTP 23.2)

Y Nant: 'I Rys ap Siôn ap Siancyn o Aberpegwrn i ddymuno iddo ddychwelyd
adref o Loegr' (GYN 1.29)

In these poems the image Gwalchmai is outlined regarding the following aspects: general comparison: GDID XVII.40; GGlnet 19.28; GGlnet 60.7; GGlnet 95.59, 61; GHD 48.33; GHS 24.16; GIF 9.8; GLGC 112.108; GLGC 210.15; GLM XIII.23; GLM XXVII.42; GLM XLI.18; GLM LXXI.33; GLM LXXVI.8; GLM LXXXVI.61; GLI 8.30; GLI 24.13; GTA X.67; GTA XXIII.32; GTA XCV.17; GTP 5.53; GTP 22.2; GTP 23.2; GYN 1.29; OPGO XV.5; OPGO XLII.7; PWDN VIII.68; relating to the 'Matter of Britain' tradition: PWDN VIII.41; as an ideal of a perfect man: CYS DT 12.75; GDID 13.35; GDID VIII.20; GIF 28.73; GLGC 173.26; GLM XLI.62; GLM LXXII.47; as an excellent warrior: GDID XIII.4; GHD 24.5; GHD 77.32; GLGC 112.50; GS DT 16.13; as a peacemaker: GMRh 8.30; as a leader of men (Gwalchmai gwŷr): GGlnet 80.26; GLDar 24.13; GLI 24.13; as an auspicious person: GDID XI.44; as a host who gives out wine: CYS DT 3.19; GDE LVIII.29; GGlnet 8.60; GGlnet 15.16; GGlnet 41.16; as Olwen's husband: GLM XLI.18; GLM LXXI.33; GLM LXXXVI.61; GLM XCVII.15; in the context of *Y Seint Greal*: GHS

2.56; GTA LXVII.49; GTA LXXXIX.8; in the framework of the *Ubi Sunt?* theme: GSDT 16.13; of his strength: GLM LVII.17; his physical size: GLM VIII.27-8; his dignity: GIF 10.43 (possible); his knowledge or his connection with the trees (*gwydd*): PWDN XII.35; his ever-lasting reputation: GMB 16.52; his sorrow: GDLI 58.49; GLGC 158.35.

'Moliant i Syr Siôn Bwrch ap Huw Bwrch o'r Drefrudd' (GGlnet 80) is worth our particular attention because it alludes to the same figure in two different forms as if they were two different people. In the first instance in line 26 he appears as 'Gwalchmai'r Gwŷr', indicating his traditional image in the Welsh context as a leader of men, echoing the triad tradition; in the second in line 36 the name 'Syr Gawen' appears among other names that belong to the tradition of the 'Matter of Britain', i.e. Syr Ffwg, Syr Gei, Syr Liwnel, Syr Libus and Syr Befus (GGlnet 80.35-39). Guto'r Glyn keeps the Middle English form 'Gawain' and uses the Welsh spelling ('Gawen') of it instead of replacing it with the native Welsh form 'Gwalchmai' when referring to the figure in the tradition of Middle English romances. The fact that they appear in two separate spellings gives the deep impression that Guto'r Glyn regarded the Middle English Gawain legends as belonging to an alien tradition and that he had no appetite to tame it with Welshness.

I don't know if Guto'r Glyn loved wine more than other poets of his time, but he did relate Gwalchmai's name to the vestry, wine, and the wine-cellar three times (GGlnet 8.60, GGlnet 15.16 and GGlnet 41.16). Also Dafydd ab Edmwnd and Syr Dafydd Trefor mention him once as a host who provides guests with mead (GDE

LVIII.29) and wine (CYSDT 3.19). This could be no more than an ascription of the idea of generosity to a literary figure, but it is equally possible that there was some kind of story featuring Gwalchmai as a generous host. Unfortunately we have no way to find out the potential story.

Gwalchmai's sorrow and complaint is a factor not traditionally attached to him in the Welsh context, therefore, considering the fact the Lewys Glyn Cothi and Dafydd Llwyd o Fathafarn were contemporaries to Malory, it is most probable that this kind of allusion is drawn from Malory's work.

One interesting thing about Lewys Môn is that he regards Olwen as Gwalchmai's wife (GLM XLI.18-20; GLM LXXI.33-4; GLM LXXXVI.61; GLM XCVII.15). It must have been a recent development, if not completely the poet's own invention.

3.2.4. Melwas and Medrawd

The references to Melwas and Medrawd, including the possible original forms of the names, Geoffrey of Monmouth's influence on the development of their portraits, the early Welsh narrative sources, and the references by *Beirdd y Tywysogion* and *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*, have all been investigated in detail by Ian Hughes in 'Camlan, Medrawd a Melwas', *Dwned* 13 (2007), 11-46. I recommend that readers consult his article for the analysis of these two names, for I don't believe that I can do a better job than his on this particular topic. The only thing I would like to

do in this section is to give the locations where the two names appear in the poetry of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* whose works are edited and published in *Cyfres Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* between year 2007 and this year (2015).

References to Melwas by *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* additional to those discussed in the above mentioned article:

Gruffudd Gryg: 'Moliant Einion ap Gruffudd ap Hywel' (GGGr 1.62), Hywel Dafi: 'Moliant Gruffudd ap Nicolas a'i ddau fab' (GHD 80.6) and 'Awdl foliant i Domas Gwyn ap Siancyn' (GHD 85.37), and Y Nant: 'Moliant Tomas ap Syr Rhosier Fychan i ddymuno iddo ddychwelyd o gastell Penfro' (GYN 12.1), where he is presented as a standard of a solider and characteristic of his valour.

Ieuan Gethin: 'Cais i ryddhau Owain Tudur o'r cachar' (GIGe 1.46)

Owain Tudur secretly married Catherine of Valois, the widow of Henry V of England. Their marriage was not announced until after her death in 1437. The potential political influence of this marriage and the status of the children born in this marriage irritated Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, and he devised the arrest of Owain Tudur in the same year and imprisoned him in Newgate Prison in London.¹⁵⁵ It is difficult for us to decide the exact implication of Ieuan Gethin's allusion, for as the editor notes, he might be simply referring to Melwas as a symbol of valour and comparing Owain Tudur to him, or he might be using the name in the same sort of

¹⁵⁵ See editor's note to this poem, GIGe, pp. 91-5.

context as does Dafydd ap Gwilym (DGnet 65.19, 25), referring to the legend of Melwas abducting Gwenhwyfar, or else it could be that he was talking about Melwas as a lover who is always successful in winning the heart of the maiden.¹⁵⁶

Additional references to Medrawd by *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*:

Gwilym Ddu o Arfon: 'Moliant Syr Gruffudd Llwyd ap Rhys ap Gruffudd o Dregarnedd' (GGDT 6.78), where he is praised of according to his military talent.

3.2.5. Peredur

There are two characters named Peredur in the triads. One is Peredur fab Eliffer, the other is Peredur fab Efrog Iarll,¹⁵⁷ and the latter is the character Peredur in the Welsh romances. He is the hero of the romance *Peredur*, which in a sense is similar in its narrative to the idea of the *mabinogi* as the genre which tells of the youthful exploits of a hero. It should be beyond doubt that although he does appear briefly in *Gereint* and *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*,¹⁵⁸ the medieval Welsh poets' knowledge about him drew from the romance that bears his name, before the story of *Y Seint Greal* became popular in the 15th century. Bleddyn Fardd is the only one among *Beirdd y Tywysogion* who mentions him in a poem: 'Marwnad Rhys ap Maredudd ap Rhys' (CBT VII46.15-6), where he is alluded to as an excellent warrior.

¹⁵⁶ See GIGe 1.46n, pp. 101-2.

¹⁵⁷ For Peredur fab Eliffer, see triads 8, 30, 44, 70; for Peredur fab Efrog Iarll, see TYP⁴, triads 86, 91, App.IV.2. However as all three of the triads are comparatively recent, and above all that the source of Triads 86 and 91 is *Y Seint Greal*, they cannot be used as an evidence to argue for the existence of Peredur as an Arthurian figure in early Welsh literature.

¹⁵⁸ *Gereint*, l. 605 and BR, p. 19.17. In both tales his appearance is brief.

References to Peredur by *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* up to c.1400:

Dafydd ap Gwilym: 'Dyddgu' (DGnet 86.37)

Einion Offeiriad: 'Moliant Syr Rhys ap Gruffudd' (GEO 1.35)

Gruffudd ap Maredudd ap Dafydd: 'Moliant Tudur Fychan ap Goronwy o Dreicastell a Phenmynydd' (GGMDi.3.59)

-----: 'Englynion i Oronwy Fychan ap Tudur pan oedd yn glaf' (GGMDi.5.143)

-----: 'Englynion marwnad Goronwy Fychan ap Tudur' (GGMDi.7.22)

Ieuan Llwyd ab y Gargam: 'Moliant Hopgyn ap Tomas o Ynysforgan' (GDC12.19)

Iolo Goch: 'Achau Owain Glyndŵr' (GIG VIII.55)

Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig Hen: 'Marwnad Goronwy ap Tudur o Benmynydd' (GLIG 5.36)

Meurig ab Iorwerth: 'Moliant Hopgyn ap Tomas o Ynysforgan' (GDC 13.12)

Rhisierdyn, 'Marwnad Hywel ap Gruffudd o Eifionydd' (GSRh 6.32)

Rhys Goch Eryri, 'Ateb cyntaf Rhys Goch Eryri i Lywelyn ab y Moel' (GRhGE 7.1)

Most of these allusions are direct parallels between the image of Peredur and the object of the poem (GDC 12.19; GGMDi 3.59; GGMDi 5.143; GGMDi 7.22; GLIG 5.36; GSRh 6.32), others mention his swiftness in battle, especially his spear and blade (GEO 1.35) and his dexterity in fighting (GDC 13.12; GRhGE 7.1).

The reference in 'Dyddgu' (DGnet 86), or to be more specific, lines 33 to 52 of the poem, as Rachel Bromwich points out, is a detailed reiteration in verse of the dead bird episode in Peredur, except that the duck is replaced by a blackbird.¹⁵⁹

References to Peredur in the works of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* c.1400-1525:

Dafydd Llwyd of Fathafarn: 'Cywydd marwnad Thomas ap Gruffudd ap Nicolas a laddwyd mewn ymladd yn y maes ym Mhennal' (GDLI 59.33)

Dafydd Nanmor: 'I Domas ap Rhys o'r Tywyn' (PWDN VIII.3)

Guto'r Glyn: 'Moliant i Syr Rhys ap Tomas o Abermalais' (GGlnet 14.33)

-----: 'Gofyn saeled gan Wiliam Rodn ap Richard Rodn o Holt ar ran Dafydd Bromffild o Fers' (GGlnet 73.23)

-----: 'Moliant i Ddafydd Llwyd ap Gruffudd o Abertanad' (GGlnet 86.34)

Gutun Owain: 'I Reinallt ap Gruffydd ap Bleddyn o'r Tŵr yn y Wyddgrug' (OPGO XVI.37)

Hywel Cilan: 'Moliant i feibion Iorwerth ab Ieuan o'r Waun' (GHCil XXI.34)

Hywel Swrdwal: 'Awdl foliant Rhosier Fychan' (GHS 2.55, spelt as 'Predur')

Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal: 'I ddiolch Syr Rhiaiaert Gethin am lugan gan Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal' (GHS 24.22)

Ieuan ap Llywelyn Fychan: 'Gofyn bytheiaid gan Fadog ap Deio o Dremeirchion' (GILIF 1.1)

Llewys Glyn Cothi: 'Moliant Dafydd ap Tomas' (GLGC 37.32)

¹⁵⁹ TYP⁴, p. 480.

-----: 'Awdl foliant Wiliam Fychan' (GLGC 89.23)

-----: 'Moliant Syr Wiliam Herbert' (GLGC 112.7, as 'Syr P'redur')

-----: 'Moliant Siôn Hafart' (GLGC 138.25)

-----: 'Moliant Bedo ap Rhys' (GLGC 192.19)

-----: 'Moliant Rheinallt ap Gruffudd' (GLGC 214.18)

Lewys Môn: 'Moliant Syr Wiliam Herbart' (GLM LXXXVII.63-4, as 'Prydyr...Paladir Hir')

Tudur Aled: 'Caer Farlais, i Syr Rhys ap Thomas' (GTA XII.49)

-----, 'D'enw yn fwy no dyn yn fyw, i Syr Rhys ap Tomas' (GTA XIII.74)

-----, 'Blaenawr a byw i Lonaid, cywydd i Syr Gruffudd ap Rhys (ap Tomas)' (GTA XXXVII.53)

-----, 'Crino dyn yw cronni da, cywydd i Reinallt a Gruffudd ap Rhys' (GTA XL.38)

-----, 'Cyngor i anturiwr, cywydd i Robert Salbri o Ial' (GTA LXVII.45, as 'Predur')

-----, 'Y bwyled, i ofyn pedwar bwyled i bedwar mab Elis Eutun dros eu hewythr Hywel ap Siencyn o Dywyn' (GTA CXVI.47)

Y Nant: 'I ofyn caseg gan Siôn ap Gwilym Fychan dros Domas ap Siencyn Twrbil' (GYN 8.111)

The allusions in GHS2.55 and GTA LXVII.45 show a clear context of *Y Seint Greal*, others are general comparisons: GILIF 1.1; GLGC 89.23; GLGC 112.7;

GLGC 138.25; GLGC 192.19; GLGC 214.18; GTA XII.49; GTA XL.38; GTA CXVI.47; GYN 8.111; comparison with a background of the Three Romances: GGInet 73.23; GLGC 37.32; relating his connection with the north (Scotland): GLGC 89.23; GLGC 112.7; demonstrate him as an example of a distinguished fighter: GGInet 14.33; GTA XIII.74; GTA XXXVII.53; OPGO XVI.37; mentions him together with his spear or his blade, thus highlighting his skill in battle: PWDN VIII.3; GDLI 59.33; GGInet 86.34; GHCil XXI.34; GHS 24.22; GLM LXXXVII.63-4.

In GLGC 37.32, Lewys Glyn Cothi estimates that young Dafydd would grow to be one with the nature of Peredur. It could be a simple comparison, or it could be alluding to the growth of Peredur in the romance named after him.

Dafydd ab Edmwnd has a reference to 'caer Beredur' (GDE IV.1), though it is not known where the place is.

3.2.6. Owain

The circumstances of the name Owain in medieval Welsh poetry are probably the most complicated in its Arthurian connotation. According to Meredith Cane's study, the name Owain is one of the longest established and highly popular male names in Wales during the Middle Ages, appearing for the first time in the third generation (400-430) in the recorded Welsh genealogies and continuing into the last

generation (16A, 1530-70).¹⁶⁰ Anyone with an average level of knowledge of Welsh history can easily think of a few famous Owains, such as Owain ab Urien, Owain Gwynedd, Owain Lawgoch, and above all, Owain Glyndŵr. The great fame of the historical Owain ab Urien¹⁶¹ might explain why Owain is found appearing so frequently in both the works of *Beirdd y Tywysogion* and *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*.¹⁶²

Owain is a one hundred per cent positive figure in the Three Romances, or to be more precisely, in two of them, because he is absent from *Gereint*. In *Peredur* he is a prominent knight in Arthur's court, the one who introduced the fundamentals of a knighly life to him, and similar to Gwalchmai in courtesy. He is the hero of the romance conventionally named after him, although in this tale he is depicted as being sort of the 'curiosity kills the cat' type. In addition, the episode in *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy* of Owain's ravens and Arthur's warriors attacking and killing each other while the two are playing *gwyddbwyll* is perhaps the most grotesque and impressive scene in the whole story. However, the number of allusions in the poetry recognisable as referring definitely to Owain ab Urien is far smaller than we might have expected.

There are only two references to him in the works of *Beirdd y Tywysogion*, one by Cynddelw in 'Rheingerdd Efa ferch Madog ap Maredudd' (CBT III5.67) and the other by Bleddyn Fardd in 'Marwnad Dafydd ap Gruffudd ap Llywelyn' (CBT

¹⁶⁰ Meredith Cane, *Personal Names of Men in Wales, Cornwall and Brittany, 400-1400 AD* (PhD thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2003), p. 46.

¹⁶¹ Unless the historical Taliesin were a toady flatterer.

¹⁶² Ann Parry Owen's 'Mynegai i Enwau Priod ym Marddoniaeth Beirdd y Tywysogion' lists 10 entries for the name 'Owain' referring to different individuals, see LIC 20 (1997), p. 35, and her 'Mynegai i Enwau Priod ym Marddoniaeth y Bedwaredd Ganrif ar Ddeg' lists 6 found in the works of 14th century Welsh poets, see LIC 31 (2008), p. 67.

VII52.32).¹⁶³ Cynddelw's allusion highlights the generosity of Owain, one of the major values praised in Taliesin's poems, and thus a conventional one by Cynddelw's time, and as Rachel Bromwich notes, it echos the verses in 'Diffaith Aelwyd Rheged', a poem belonging to the Canu Urien cycle.¹⁶⁴ Bromwich also draws upon the name of Owain as an example of the transmission and relocation of the early Welsh tradition of the Old North to Wales.¹⁶⁵ According to her statement in another place, this might have happened in the 9th century,¹⁶⁶ therefore we feel safe to say that by the second half of the 12th century, the literary context of Owain had settled down very well in Wales, and this might be the reason why in the few allusions in poetry of 12th to early 16th centuries that can be certainly interpreted as referring to Owain ab Urien, there is no obvious or purposeful emphasis on his northern origin. It is difficult to read the reference by Bleddyn Fardd without thinking of *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*. He described Dafydd ap Gruffudd ap Llywelyn as: "Gŵr a wnaeth adaw adar - ar gynrain / Fal cigfran Owain, awydd ddaffar". It is not clear whether the image of the raven here is used literally meaning a bird or figuratively meaning Owain's warrior, yet either way the poet's intention is clear - he meant to praise the patron's prowess in war.

Another factor that must be taken into account when looking at the references to Owain is the medieval Welsh prophetic tradition of *Y Mab Darogan*. Between 10th

¹⁶³ Rachel Bromwich mentions another one by Cynddelw in CBT IV1.27-8, but this one is rejected by Ann Parry Owen in her index. I follow Parry Owen's opinion on this matter about the reading of the text.

¹⁶⁴ TYP⁴, p. 470.

¹⁶⁵ TYP⁴, p. 470.

¹⁶⁶ Rachel Bromwich, 'Concepts of Arthur', SC X/XI (1975/76), 163-81. In Jenny Rowland's edition the title is given as 'Aelwyd Rheged', see EWSP, pp. 426-8.

century (the generally accepted date of the composition of *Armes Prydain*) and 1485 (the year Henry Tudor defeated his uncle Richard at Bosworth and ascended to the English throne), many poets undertook the task of singing prophetic poems (*canu brud*), particularly when the occurrence of some events stirred up the political imagination and a certain kind of 'nationalist' zeal. On the list of candidates Owain's name is found along with that of Arthur, Cynan, Cadwaladr, Caswallon, Hiriell, and a few less famous figures.¹⁶⁷ It should be noted that in most cases in medieval Welsh poetry it is Owain who is referred to as a potential national redeemer with a *Mab Darogan* background setting, especially when the real name of the subject of the poem is also Owain. Indeed this coincidence gives plenty of room for the poets to play with the multiple implications of the name to create a text that is idiomatic without being too plain.

Therefore it is not surprising that most references to Owain by *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* are straight parallels but the context is strikingly foggy. I have tried my best by reading the poems themselves as well as the editorial notes to identify the context and pick out those more likely to be referring to Owain Lawgoch, Owain Glyndŵr, Owain Tudur or other individuals named Owain, and only list the allusions most probably referring to Owain ab Urien.

References to Owain by *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* up to c.1400:

Gruffudd ap Maredudd ap Dafydd: 'Moliant Tudur Fychan ap Goronwy o

¹⁶⁷ Aled Llion Jones, *Darogan: Prophecy, Lament and Absent Heroes in Medieval Welsh Literature* (Cardiff, 2013), p. 3.

Dre Castell a Phenmynydd' (GGMDi 3.202)

-----: 'Englynion i Oronwy Fychan ap Tudur pan oedd yn glaf' (GGMDi 5.133)

[context not clear]

Sefnyn: 'Moliant Goronwy Fychan ap Tudur o Benmynydd' (GSRh 3.89)

[context not clear]

The context of GSRh 3.89 is not very clear, but all three of them are direct parallels between the patron and the figure of Owain.

During the 15th century poets began to allude to Owain by his epithet 'Iarll y Cawg' or 'Iarll yr Ôg', suggesting an increasing preference of the Owain of the romances. References to Owain c.1400-c.1525:

Dafydd Llwyd o Fathafarn: 'Cywydd y gigfran' (GDLi 36.13-4)

-----: 'Cywydd i ofyn cymod i Ruffudd ap Nicolas' (GDLi 46.13-4, as 'mab Urien')

-----: 'Cywydd moliant i Syr Rhys ap Thomas' (GDLi 50.19, 26, 28)

-----: 'Cywydd marwnad Thomas ap Gruffudd ap Nicolas a laddwyd mewn ymladd yn y maes ym Mhennal' (GDLi 59.10)

Gruffudd Llwyd: 'Mawl i Hywel ap Meurig Fychan o Nannau a Meurig Llwyd ym Mhowys' (GGLi 11.40)

Guto'r Glyn: 'Gofyn brigawn gan Sieffrai Cyffin ap Morus o Groesoswallt ar ran Dafydd Llwyd ap Gruffudd o Abertanad' (GGInet 98.63-4)

Gutun Owain: 'I fun fwyarol olwg' (OPGO VII.28)

Yr wyf rhwng y port a'r ôg,
Wen ferch, fal Owain farchog:
Nad ym drymder yr cerydd,
Luned wen, oleuni dydd!

Huw Cae Llwyd: 'Moliant Dafydd Fychan o Linwent ym Maelienydd' (GHCL1
XXIII.22)

Hywel Dafî: 'Moliant Morgan ap Dafydd Gam ac Ieuan ei fab' (GHD 20.20)

-----, 'Deisyf heddwch rhwng Brycheiniog a Morgannwg' (GHD 60.16)

Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal: 'Moliant Hywel ap Dafydd ap Bedo o Dregynon gan
Ieuan ap Hywel Swrdwal' (GHS 30.46, referred to as 'Iarll yr Og')

Ieuan Deulwyn: 'Cywydd i ferch' (CWID II.37, as 'mab Urien')

-----: 'I ferch a'i gwallt' (CWID XXX.5)

Iorwerth Fynglwyd: 'I Syr Siôn Raglan' (GIF 16.32)

Lewys Daron: 'Awdl foliant i Siôn ap Madog ap Hywel, Bodfel' (GLDar 1.97)

[context not clear]

-----, 'Moliant Siôn ap Madog ap Hywel, Bodfel' (GLDar 2.18, mentioning only
the 'cawg')

-----, 'Moliant Siôn Pilstwn, Gaernarfon' (GLDar 12.57, as 'milwr y Cawg')

Lewys Glyn Cothi: 'Moliant Gruffudd ap Nicolas' (GLGC 16.16)

-----, 'Moliant Owain ap Gruffudd ap Nicolas' (GLGC 17.49)

-----, 'Moliant Meibion Tomas ap Gruffudd ap Nicolas' (GLGC 18.51)

-----, 'Moliant Morgan ap Tomas' (GLGC 19.3)

-----, 'Moliant Owain Fychan ap Gruffudd' (GLGC 199.51)

Lewys Môn: 'Marwnad Morys ap Siôn ap Maredudd' (GLM XLVI.43, as 'mab

Urien')

-----, 'Moliant Tomas ap Rhys' (GLM LXXX.59, as 'y Cawg')

-----, 'Moliant Edwart Grae' (GLM LXXXIV.20, as 'Iarll y Cawg')

-----, 'Moliant Syr Rhys ap Tomas' (GLM LXXXVIII.12)

Llawdden: 'Moliant Phylib ap Rhys o Genarth' (GL110.44)

-----: 'I ofyn saled gan Fadog ap Hywel o Elfael dros Ddafydd ap Maredudd
Fychan o Arddfaelog' (GL117.52)

-----: 'Ateb Llawdden' (GL131.12=GHS19.12)

Syr Phylib Emlyn: 'I ofyn march gwyn gan Rys ap Dafydd o Flaen Tren ger
Llanybydder' (GSPE 2.31-2)

Tudur Aled: 'D'enw yn fwy no dyn yn fyw, i Syr Rhys ap Tomas' (GTA XII.2,
67, 70, 71)

-----, 'A'i flewyn fal y wiwair, cywydd i Syr Rhys ap Tomas i erchi march' (GTA
XCVIII.65)

-----, 'Goreu na bai garu'n y byd' (GTA CXXIV.28)

Owain is presented in terms of the following characteristics and background of
prose narratives:

In the general context of *Owein*: GLDar 2.18; GLDar 12.57; all references in
GTA;

The description in *Owein* of Owain's relationship with the lion: GLGC 16.16;
GSPE 2.31-2;

In his friendship with Luned: GLGC 16.16;

His love towards a certain maiden: CWID II.37;

The episode in *Owein* of Owain getting caught between the outer gate and the portcullis: OPGO VII.28;

The description in *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy* of Owain and his ravens: CWID XXX.5; GDLI 36.13-4; GDLI 46.13-4; GDLI 50.26, 28; GHD 60.16; GLGC 17.49; GLGC 18.51; GLGC 19.3; GLGC 199.51; GLM LXXXVIII.12;

The fighting between Owain and the Black Knight: GGLI 11.40;

General reference showing an Arthurian context: GDLI 50.19; GIF 16.32; GLM XLVI.43;

His bravery in battle in an Arthurian context: GDLI 59.10; GHS 30.46;

As a traditional hero with no obvious Arthurian connotation: GGInet 98.63-4; GHCLI XXIII.22; GHD 20.20; GLGC 17.49; GLI 10.44;

His doublet: GLI 31.12=GHS 19.12;

His cauldron: GLI 17.52.

Huw Cae Llwyd portrayed Owain as a traditional hero, as he mentioned 'bwriad Owain ab Urien' in his 'Moliant Dafydd Fychan o Linwent ym Maelienydd' (GHCLI XXIII.22). Bromwich read the word 'bwriad' in its commonest meaning 'purpose', while I tend to take this word as being the nominalised form of 'bwrw' (throw, blow, cast), thus meaning the same as the verb from which it is derived, as with the case of

GL110.44;¹⁶⁸ nonetheless, whichever reading of the word we choose to take, the general purport of the reference remains clear.

Tudur Aled refers to Owain as 'Iarll y Cawg' (GTA XIII.2, 67, 71; LXI.63; XCVIII.66), 'Iarll yr Iâ a'r Llew a'r Ôg' (GTA XIII.71), and 'Owain farchog' (GTA XCVIII.65; CXXIV.28), showing overtly that he thought of Owain completely within the framework of the romance. It is not easy to say if this can be attributed to the Welsh or the French tradition, because the two correspondent romances in the two languages are consistent with each other in this respect. The same can be said of the two references by Lewys Môn where Owain is referred to by his epithet 'Iarll y Cawg' (GLM LXXXIV.20) or simply 'y Cawg' (GLM LXXX.59).

3.2.7. Luned

The presence of the character Luned in medieval Welsh poetry derives solely from the tale *Owein* or *Iarlles y Ffynnon* among early Welsh Arthurian narratives. Luned is the actual main female character in the tale. She is clever, strong-minded, proactive and practical, which can be best seen from her arranging things for her lady and persuading her into marrying Owain. However, her deep affection for Owain looks inconsistent with her usual pragmatic style of doing things, for she decides to help him immediately after hearing him speaking, and later defends his

¹⁶⁸ GPC¹, p. 355.

reputation against the countess's chamberlains even though that deed puts her life into danger. Owain and Luned are not lovers in the usual sense of the word, yet there is a special kind of relationship between them, halfway between friendship and love between a man and a woman, I would say, and it seems that Luned's feelings towards Owain are slightly deeper than Owain's feelings towards her.

There is no reference to Luned in the works of *Beirdd y Tywysogion*. In the works of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* up to c.1400 she is mentioned only five times:

Dafydd ap Gwilym: 'Llw Morfudd' (DGnet 105.5)

-----: 'Y Drych' (DGnet 132.7)

Gruffudd ap Maredudd ap Dafydd: 'Serch gwrthodedig' (GGMDiii 4.7)

-----: 'Marwnad Gwenhwyfar o Bentraeth' (GGMDiii 5.149)

Iorwerth ab y Cyriog: 'I Efa' (GGrG 4.22)¹⁶⁹

In all these references Luned appears as a symbol of beauty. It must be the result of reasonable imagination of the poets, for in the Welsh romance *Owein* only her head-dressing, clothes and shoes are described, not her countenance.¹⁷⁰ The name Luned is mentioned thrice in the love poem 'Cusan' by Dafydd ap Gwilym as well (DGnet 86.16, 44, 50), but the content of the poem shows clearly that it is the real name of the girl referred to in the poem and not the literary figure in *Owein*.

Therefore they do not belong to the category of the current study.

¹⁶⁹ One of the earliest references to her. See the editor's note, GGrG 4.22n, p. 66. However, the precise date of the poem is not given by the editor.

¹⁷⁰ *Owein*, ll. 290-2.

References to Luned by *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* c.1400-c.1525:

Dafydd Nanmor: 'Gorchestion Dafydd Nanmor bellach' (PWDN LIV.25)

Deio ab Ieuan Du: 'I ferch' (GDID 19.1, 22)

Guto'r Glyn: 'Ymrafael Harri Gruffudd o'r Cwrtnewydd ac Ieuan Gethin am serch Gwladus o Lyn-nedd' (GGlnet 34.29)

Gutun Owain: 'I ferch ŵyl o'r uchelwaed' (OPGO VI.31)

-----, 'I fun fwyarol olwg' (OPGO VII.30)

Ieuan Dyfi: 'Cywydd harddwch Dafydd Llwyd ap Llywelyn ap Gruffudd Esgwier o Fathafarn' (GDLI 94.33=GHCLI 61.33)

Lewys Glyn Cothi: 'Moliant Phylib ap Tomas Fychan a Gwenllian' (GLGC 79.6)

-----, 'Moliant Tomas ap Phylib a Siân' (GLGC 91.32)

-----, 'Moliant Hywel ap Ystyfyn a Sioned' (GLGC 159.39)

-----, 'Marwnad Gwenllian ferch Owain Glyndŵr' (GLGC 188.58, 60)

Tudur Aled: 'Tad haelioni, cywydd i Syr Roser Salbri' (GTA XX.107, name spelt as 'Eluned')

-----, 'Mae un yn ffals, minnau'n ffŵl' (GTA CXXX.49)

Tudur Penllyn: 'I Lowri, gwraig Rhys ap Meredudd' (GTP 13.38)

The section containing the reference to Luned in GLGC 91 reads 'Â'i wayw, Tomas yw Owain / ab Urien, brins gerbron brain; / Maestres Siân, lle yr hanyw, /

Luned ac ail Indeg yw.' (ll.29-32). Alluding to Luned as a model of beauty like Indeg, this allusion exhibits unmistakably the poet's familiarity with the tale of *Owein*, and indeed shows that he regards Owain and Luned as the male and female protagonists of the story.

While continuing the tradition of referring to Luned as a paragon of beauty (GDID 19.1, 22; GLGC 79.6; GLGC 159.39; OPGO VII.30; PWDN LIV.25), or speaking of her in a general sense as an example of a noble woman (GDLI 94.33; GGInet 34.29; GLGC 188.60; GTA XX.107; GTA CXXX.49), poets of this period also added another virtue to her personality, that is, hospitality, or as a hostess providing food and drink and accommodation, which originates from the relevant paragraphs in *Owein* as well (GLGC 188.58; GTP 13.38).¹⁷¹ Gutun Owain calls Luned 'the propitious' (*dedwydd*), an idea that is not very much relevant but does not clash with her image in *Owein* either. The modest increase in the number of allusions to Luned in the 15th century and the first quarter of the 16th century attests to the growth of the popularity of the tale *Owein* among the aristocrats of Welsh society of that time.

3.2.8. Geraint

The tale of *Gereint* is probably the one of the Three Romances that most easily makes a reader or a listener fall asleep. Geraint is already an established knight from

¹⁷¹ *Owein*, ll. 317-30, 333-5.

the beginning of the story, and more substantially, as Rachel Bromwich remarks, this tale is a rendering of the popular medieval theme of the triumph of female constancy over all impediments, blended with some Celtic elements,¹⁷² therefore it is not strange that the author's description of him is more formulaic than the protagonists in the other two Welsh romances. It might be that medieval Welsh poets felt the same as present day readers, which might be part of the reason why the name of Geraint remains on a lower level of popularity among the poets than most other main characters in the Welsh Arthurian world. In most of the other allusions his presence is little more than a bare name, except perhaps triad 14, which tells that he is a seafarer or fleet owner, but this attribute is not reflected in medieval Welsh poetry.

There are two references to him by *Beirdd y Tywysogion*. One is found in an elegy by Bleddyn Fardd to Llywelyn ap Gruffudd ap Llywelyn (CBT VII51.31), where Geraint is depicted as a model of outstanding warrior, the other is made by Llywarch ap Llywelyn (Prydydd y Moch) in 'Mawl Rhodri ab Owain o Wynedd' (CBT V7.9) where Geraint's ferocity in battle is emphasised.

References to Geraint in the works of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* up to c.1400:

Casnodyn: 'Moliant Ieuan Llwyd o Lyn Aeron' (GC 1.55)

Dafydd Ddu o Hiraddug: 'Awdl sanctaidd am ddiwedd dyn a'i gorff' (GEO 2.17, referred to as 'eurfab y brenin a iarllles Erbin')

¹⁷² TYP⁴, pp. 356-7.

Dafydd y Coed: 'Moliant Rhydderch ab Ieuan Llwyd o Lyn Aeron' (GDC 1.40)

Einion Offeiriad: 'Moliant Syr Rhys ap Gruffudd' (GEO 1.29)

Gruffudd ap Maredudd ap Dafydd: 'Moliant Tudur Fychan ap Goronwy o Dreicastell a Phenmynydd' (GGMDi 3.40)

-----: 'Moliant Goronwy Fychan ap Tudur o Benmynydd' (GGMDi 4.77)

-----: 'Englynion i Oronwy Fychan ap Tudur pan oedd yn glaf' (GGMDi 5.132)

Ieuan Llwyd ab y Gargam: 'Moliant Hopgyn ap Tomas o Ynysforgan' (GDC 12.46)

Llywelyn Goch ap Meurig Hen: 'Moliant Rhys ap Rhys ap Gruffudd o Abermarlais' (GLIG 3.61)

Madog Dwygraig: 'Moliant Hopgyn ap Tomas o Ynysforgan' (GMD 4.2)

Ustus Llwyd: 'Dychan i swrcod Madog Offeiriad' (GMB 21.34)

The allusions to Geraint by *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* in the 14th century, though not huge in number, are more diverse than we might have expected from reading the Welsh romance in which he is the hero. Apart from direct comparisons (GGMDi 4.77; GMD 4.2) and general references to his honour and excellence (GEO 1.29; GEO 2.17), Geraint is also praised for his bravery (GDC 1.40), for his generosity (GGMDi 5.132), for his correct thought/judgment (GDC 12.46), as having a privileged position in song (GC1.55) and as a friend of bards (GLIG 3.61).

Judging by the context, the reference in GGMDi 3.40 seems to refer to the words said by Geraint to Enid - 'Llid Gwair, gair Geraint, oedd faint ei fâr.' -

suggesting that the poet knew the episode of *Gereint*.

'Dychan i swrcod Madog Offeiriad' (GMB 21) is a witty satire poem to a certain clergyman called Madog of whom we know nothing for certain.¹⁷³ His old, torn surcoat is the theme of the satire. To show how old and ragged it was, the poet quotes a heap of legendary characters of the past by repeating the same structure 'Hi a fu yn/am...' over thirty lines, creating an extremely funny effect,¹⁷⁴ as well as displaying his knowledge of traditional tales. As the editor remarks, it is reasonable to believe that he knew the description of Geraint's clothing - 'a pheis a swrcot o bali ymdanaw' (wearing a tunic and a surcoat of brocaded silk),¹⁷⁵ and therefore a proof that he knew the story of the Three Romances.¹⁷⁶

From c.1400 onwards until c.1525, as if the poets agreed upon leaving the figure Geraint out of their repertoire of quotation, there is a sharp drop in the number of references to him. Apart from an allusion by Guto'r Glyn in his 'Moliant i Ddafydd Llwyd ap Gruffudd o Abertanad' (GGlnet 86.46) referring to Geraint's large size like that of a giant, and in an *ymryson* poem 'Y braich drain' by Wiliam ap Dafydd ab Ieuan ap Llywelyn (CYS DT 5.14) which describes him as a young lad with long shanks, the only poet who paid some attention to him was Lewys Glyn Cothi. His references to Geraint, however, seem to be more conventional than most of his references to other Arthurian characters. In 'Moliant Tomas ap Phylib a Siân'

¹⁷³ See the editor's note to the poem, GMB, p. 336-7.

¹⁷⁴ It becomes even funnier if we think of boasting of knowledge by the Taliesin figure through the structure 'Mi a fûm...' in the Book of Taliesin.

¹⁷⁵ *Gereint*, l. 94; Mab., p. 141.

¹⁷⁶ GMB, p. 341.

(GLGC 91.25) the patron and patroness are compared to Geraint and Enid, pointing clearly to the context of the romance. In 'Moliant Dafydd ap Siôn a Gwenllïan' (GLGC 97) Lewys Glyn Cothi adopts the form of the triad to praise Dafydd: 'Tri dewrion llonydd: / Geraint a Gweirydd, / o'r tridyn trydydd / ydiw ef Dafydd.' It seems to me that Geraint's name is chosen here more out of the need for alliteration, although it meets at the same time the requirement of the meaning to display him conventionally as a standard of bravery. 'Moliant Ieuan ap Phylib' (GLGC 169.57) calls attention to his manliness and 'Moliant Rheinallt ap Gruffudd' (GLGC 214.21) focuses on his dignity and excellence.

3.2.9. Enid

What can be said about Geraint can be said about Enid as well. As a highly formulated character she is not expected to act in an unconventional way, and the values attached to her are traditional ones within the boundary of the narrative of the tale. She is not mentioned in the works of *Beirdd y Tywysogion*. As for *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*, Dafydd ap Gwilym once again was the one who launched Enid's career in medieval Welsh poetry. He has seven references to her: 'Merch, aderyn a bedwen' (DGnet 38.14), 'Sarhau ei was' (DGnet 74.6), 'Breichiau Morfudd' (DGnet 93.1), 'Gofyn cymod' (DGnet 97.50), 'Llychwino pryd y ferch' (DGnet 115.17), 'Llw Gau' (DGnet 141.7) and 'Yn y winllan' (DGnet 166.21), and in all except one of these instances the object of the love poem (whether a girl or a married woman) is

compared to Enid regarding her appearance or beauty. The exceptional one is DGnet 115.17, where Dafydd ap Gwilym mentions her sadness, understandably for suffering unfair treatment from her husband, thus pointing to the narrative of the romance.

Only three allusions to her by other poets are found in poetry up to c.1400:

Gronw Ddu: 'Moliant merch' (GMB 12.9)

Gruffudd ap Maredudd ap Dafydd: 'Serch gwrthodedig' (GGMDiii 4.8)

Mab Clochyddyn: 'Marwnad Gwenhwyfar wraig Hywel ap Tudur ap Gruffudd o Goedan' (GGrG 6.2, 80)

Gruffudd ap Maredudd and Mab Clochyddyn treat her name in the same way as does Dafydd ap Gwilym. Gronw Ddu praised Enid for her 'pwyll' (GMB 12.9), a word that can either mean 'care, caution, prudence, wisdom' or 'nature, temperament' here, and both implications had been attested by the 13th century.¹⁷⁷ Perhaps the poet was playing with the ambivalence of the word to add to the richness of the meaning of the line. It would match her image as a model of womanly virtue, cautious, prudent, and ready to forgive, being completely blameless in the case of Geraint's anger yet suffering much of it.

References to Enid by *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* c.1400 to c.1525:

¹⁷⁷ GPC¹, p. 2948.

Ieuan Deulwyn: 'I ferch a'i gwallt' (CWID XIII.28)

Lewys Glyn Cothi: 'Marwnad Nest o Gaeo' (GLGC 39.11, 19)

-----, 'Marwnad Gwenllian ferch Rys' (GLGC 44.2)

-----, 'Pererindod Elliw ferch Henri' (GLGC 82.43)

-----, 'Moliant Tomas ap Phylib a Siân' (GLGC 91.23)

-----, 'Awdl i ofyn llen' (GLGC 119.28)

-----, 'Moliant Dafydd ap Meredudd a Siwan' (GLGC 139.47)

-----, 'I ofyn gwely gan bedair gwraig' (GLGC 186.11)

-----, 'Marwnad Gweurful ferch Fadog' (GLGC 212.58)

Lewys Môn: 'Moliant Tomas Salbri' (GLM LVI.38)

Llawdden: 'I gusan' (GLI 5.15, 27)

Maredudd ap Rhys, 'Cywydd i wraig ieuanc' (GMRh 22.12)

Tudur Aled: 'Gem o wraig ar Gymry yw, moliant Margret ferch Gruffudd ap Rhys' (GTA XXXIX.29)

-----, 'Enaid y byd' (GTA CXXXVIII.37)

These allusions walk on the same track built by the poets in the previous century. She is praised for her beauty (CWID XIII.28; GLM LVI.38; GMRh 22.12; GTA XXXIX.29), or simply as a female character to compare with the patroness or the girl loved by the poet (GLGC 39.11, 19; GLGC 44.2; GLGC 139.47; GLGC 186.11; GLGC 212.58; GLI 5.15, 27; GTA CXXXVIII.37). If there is any difference, we could only say that the context of the romance is more frequently alluded to, as in GLGC 91.23 and GLGC 119.28; and that Lewys Glyn Cothi referred to her once

regarding her generosity (GLGC 82.43).

3.2.10. Twrch Trwyth

It might be good to end this investigation with an examination of the name Twrch Trwyth. The *Mirabilia* section of *Historia Brittonum* keeps a record of its name as 'troit', or in a corrupt form as 'Troynt',¹⁷⁸ but the story of it survived exclusively in *Culhwch ac Olwen*. It is included in this study because it is not just an animal, but a special animal, an animal transformed from a human being, and in spite of the fact that it is depicted as a totally destructive power in the tale, the Welsh poets in the Middle Ages took out the negative factor of its image and made its name into a symbol of the strength in fighting, as a laudable characteristic.

The sole reference to Twrch Trwyth in the work of *Beirdd y Tywysogion* is by Cynddelw in 'Canu Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd' (CBT IV6.204-11). This one, however, alludes to Twrch Trwyth in a quite unusual way:

Ceffid eu cinllith cŵm cunllwyd,
Ceffynt ferïon forefwyd,
Ceffitor ymdwr am Drwyd - hefelydd,
 Twrch terydd i ar fwyd,
Caffawd beirdd eu budd yn ydd wyd,
Ceffid noeth noddod rhag annwyd,
Ceffitor 'y mhraffnad, 'y mhroffwyd - araith
 Ym mhryffwn a waedwyd.

¹⁷⁸ Jon B. Coe and Simon Young, eds., *The Celtic Sources of the Arthurian Legend* (Felinfach: Llanerch, 1995), pp. 10-11.

In this stanza Cynddelw likens describing his patron as Twrch Trwyth eating his food, this indicates that Cynddelw might know about the tale of *Culhwch ac Olwen*.¹⁷⁹ I would like to speculate that he drew the allusion from an oral source, probably an onomastic tale about the high quality of grains in a certain region of Wales, a tale that would be similar in nature to the one related to Henwen in a triad.¹⁸⁰

There are five references to Twrch Trwyth in the works of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* up to c.1400:

Casnodyn: 'Dychan i Drahaearn Brydydd Mawr' (GC 11.65)

Gruffudd ap Maredudd ap Dafydd: 'Moliant i noddwr anhysbys' (GGMDi 8.12)

-----: 'I annog Owain Lawgoch i feddiannu Cymru' (GGMDiii 1.73)

Iolo Goch: 'I Syr Hywel y Fwyall' (GIG II.19)

Rhys Goch Eryri: 'Marwnad Gwilym ap Gruffudd o'r Penrhyn' (GRhGE 3.100)

Four of them are simple comparison concerning fierceness in fighting: GC 11.65; GGMDi 8.12; GGMDiii 1.73; GIG II.19. The reference in GRhGE 3.100 gives a description of Twrch Trwyth with pale fleam, flaming blade ('Dwrch Drwyd, â ffleimlwyd fflamlafn'), which is totally consistent with the portrait of Twrch Trwyth with sharp, poisonous bristles in *Culhwch ac Olwen*, and can be treated as an extension in detail of description of Twrch Trwyth, or it might be that in some oral

¹⁷⁹ This can be testified by his own poems, e.g. CBT IV4, mentioned above in our discussion of Arthur.

¹⁸⁰ For Henwen, see TYP⁴, triad 26.

versions of the tale a description of the physical characteristics of Twrch Trwyth was indeed given, because it belongs to that kind of detail which a storyteller can decide whether or not to add it, without affecting the main thread of the narrative.

Between c.1400 and c.1525 Twrch Trwyth is only mentioned by two poets. Hywel Dafi is one, in 'Moliant Gruffudd ap Nicolas a'i ddau fab' (GHD 80.28), and Lewys Glyn Cothi is the other, in 'Marwnad Rhys Llwyd ap Dafydd' (GLGC 48.23) and 'Awdl Foliant Wiliam Fychan' (GLGC 89.56). The allusion in GLGC 48.23 indicates Lewys Glyn Cothi's knowledge of the episode in *Culhwch ac Olwen*, for he says that the turn [i.e. death] that went to Twrch Trwyd was disclosed to Dafydd ('y tro a aeth i'r Twrch Trwyd / i Ddafydd a addefwyd.');

and the one in GLGC 89.56 gives the same kind of evidence, for it mentions Wiliam Fychan striking down the towers altogether like Twrch Trwyth ('trychu'r tyrau oll fal y Twrch Trwyth'). It is worth noting in passing that in medieval Welsh poetry Lewys Glyn Cothi was the first poet to spell its name as 'Twrch Trwyth'; before that time it was always written as 'Twrch Trwyd'. The different spelling here may be nothing more than meeting the requirement of rhyme, yet at least it proves of the co-existence of two forms of spelling at the same time. Hywel Dafi spells the name as 'Twrch Trwyth' in his allusion, and that one is a simple parallel of Tomas ap Gruffudd ap Nicolas and the boar in terms of ferocity in fighting.

Conclusions

In this study we have examined the context of references to names of the main Arthurian characters in the works of *Beirdd y Tywysogion* and *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* edited and published so far. Throughout our investigation of the Arthurian personal names in medieval Welsh poetry we can perceive a high degree of consistency in the mode of describing the characters over the centuries, both between the periods of *Beirdd y Tywysogion* and that of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr* and between earlier and latter periods of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*.

There is a very traditional and conventional aspect of all the male characters settled in their military talents and of all the female characters in their beauty. Generally speaking, the male characters receive more attention from the poets and are represented with a wider range of attributes than the female characters. The absence of female characters in the poetry of *Beirdd y Tywysogion* can partly be ascribed to the nature of extant manuscripts and partly to the bardic tradition of eulogy and elegy in the 12th and 13th centuries. In the 14th century, the number of references to Arthurian characters increases in proportion to the amount and quality of extant manuscripts. Dafydd ap Gwilym was undoubtedly a pioneer in introducing a number of female characters into Welsh poetry, particularly by his composition of love poems in the *cywydd* metre. On the other hand, another great Welsh poet of his time, his younger contemporary Iolo Goch seemed to have shown far less interest in Arthurian characters.

All influential poets in the 15th century and early 16th century have Arthurian references in their works more or less, yet the degree of their preferences for using such references varies distinctively from one individual poet to another. It is evident that Guto'r Glyn had an extensive knowledge of Welsh and continental Arthurian tradition and knew clearly the difference between them, but his own main interest is not in the Arthurian legends and his numerous allusions to Arthur and Gwalchmai reflect more the patrons' interests than his own. We could say that Dafydd ab Edmwnd and Dafydd Nanmor didn't have much interest in Arthurian materials either. Poets like Dafydd Llwyd o Fathafarn, Huw Cae Llwyd and Tudur Penllyn have a moderate interest in Arthurian narrative, while poets belonging to the latest generation in this study such as Tudur Aled, Lewys Glyn Cothi and Lewys Môn all demonstrate a strong inclination to quote Arthurian personal names in their poems.

Another perceptible tendency of references to those names in medieval Welsh poetry is that during the period of *Beirdd y Tywysogion* and the earlier period of *Beirdd yr Uchelwyr*, the main characters received a relatively equal amount of attention by the poets, while from the 15th century onwards, the popularity of some characters dropped dramatically, as with Geraint and Llachau, and others increased considerably, such as with Gwalchmai and Eigr, which indicates clearly that the Welsh poets were apt to adopt new fashions from the continental and Middle English literary traditions of the time. References to other Arthurian characters such as Cai and Melwas do not see a lot of change regarding the number of allusions to them, yet the fact that they are consistently referred to as positive characters until the first

quarter of the 16th century shows the other side of poets' attitude towards exotic literary traditions--the resistance and rejection to those elements that contrast too sharply with the existent and established native Welsh mood of narrative. It is obvious that the medieval Welsh poets as a professional group were fully aware of their inheritance of literary tradition in the Welsh language and their power to lead the direction of its development. They undertook to look after the tradition and actively tried to keep its continuity and rennovate it in an evolutionary manner. As poets their main concerns were not on keeping the original status of the native prose narratives intact, but the way to optimise their usage in poetry to achieve the best effect possible with the composition of poetical texts. Thus we see the names of Arthurian characters most often attached to or representative of a certain attribute when they are referred to in poetry, appearing in a snapshot style, and that is why we can only guess about the possible stories behind them.

Here the ancient dispute between form and content in literary work reveals itself in the full spectrum. The medieval Welsh poets chose to give privilege to form, and the case of Arthurian personal names is only one example of the product of this choice, yet it has its value not only in being a study of one aspect of the Welsh Arthurian tradition, but more importantly, as an exploration to provoke us into thinking and rethinking this fundamental question of literature. There are a number of other literary characters that bear a long-lasting Arthurian connection in Welsh. Some of them are giants, such as Rhita Gawr, Benlli Gawr, Huail ap Caw, others are fathers of characters discussed in this work, such as Cynyr and Yniwl, still others are

characters that are given at least a certain degree of attention in the tale of *Culhwch ac Olwen*, but only referred to occasionally by the medieval Welsh poets, such as Culhwch, Olwen, Goreu son of Custennin, and Menw son of Teirgwaedd. Considering the space limit of the current work, their names are not examined in this study, yet I believe in the value of such a discussion, and I look forward to future opportunities of discussing them.

Appendix: The Acting Scenes of *Culhwch ac Olwen*

Here is a list of the name of every character who plays a role in the plot of *Culhwch ac Olwen* in each episode in order of appearance in the scenes in which they act, as below:

Geni Culhwch: y llysfam Eiddigus (Culhwch's Birth: His Jealous Stepmother) [1-59]¹⁸¹

Cilydd fab Cyleddon Wledig [1]¹⁸²

Goleuddydd ferch Anlawdd Wledig [2]

Culhwch [10]

Culhwch yn cyrchu Llys Arthur (Culhwch goes to Arthur's Court) [60-174]

Glewlwyd Gafaelfawr [111]

Arthur [128]

Cai [134]

Culhwch yn aswyno ei gyfarws ar aelodau'r Llys (Culhwch invokes his Sureties from the Court) [175-373]

(no active character in this section, for names called see the list itself in the original text)

Yr ymchwil am Ferch y Cawr (The Quest for the Giant's daughter) [374-411]

Arthur

Cai

Bedwyr [393]

*Cynddylig Cyfarwydd [399]

Gwrhwr Gwalstawd Ieithoedd [402]

*Gwalchmai fab Gwyar [404]

Menw fab Teirgwaedd [408]

Custennin Heusawr ac Ysbaddaden Pencawr (Custennin the Shepherd and Ysbaddaden Chief Giant) [412-486]

Gwrhwr Gwalstawd [424]

¹⁸¹ The episode divisions and titles are taken from the Welsh and English versions of Bromwich and Evans's edition of CO. The numbers in the square brackets indicate line numbers in Bromwich and Evans's edition of CO. The characters which according to the plot should take an active part but actually play no significant part in the narrative are marked with a * before their names.

¹⁸² The spelling has been modernised for the convenience of contemporary readers.

Menw fab Teirgwaedd [426]
Custennin Amhynwyedig [435]
Custennin's wife

Olwen a'i Thad (Olwen and her Father) [487-564]
Olwen [498]
Culhwch
Ysbaddaden Bencawr [521]
Bedwyr
Menw

Ysbaddaden yn nodi'r Anoethau (Ysbaddaden stipulates the *Anoethau*) [565-758]
(no active character in this episode)

Cleddyf Wrnach a Hanes Goreu (The Sword of Wrnach the Giant, and the naming of Goreu) [759-824]
Wrnach Gawr [765]
Gwrhyr
Cai
Bedwyr
Goreu fab Custennin [811]

Rhyddhau Eidoel fab Aer (The Freeing of Eidoel fab Aer) [825-838]
Arthur and his war-band
Glini/Gliwi(?) [832]

Yr Anifeiliaid Hynaf (The Oldest Animals) [839-919]
Eidoel [843]
Gwrhyr
Cai
Bedwyr

Rhyddhau Mabon fab Madron (The Freeing of Mabon fab Modron) [920-928]
Cai
Bedwyr
Arthur and his war-band

Gast Rhymhi a'i Dau Genau (The bitch of Rhymhi and her Pups) [929-941]
Arthur

Y Morgrugyn Cloff (The Lame Ant) [942-952]
Gwythyr fab Greidawl [942]

Barf Dillus Farfog (The Beard of Dillus the Bearded) [953-984]

Cai
Bedwyr
Arthur

Gwyn ap Nudd a Gwythyr a Chreiddylad (Gwyn ap Nudd and Gwythyr and Creiddylad) [985-1006]

Gwythyr
Gwyn ap Nudd [990]
Cyledyr Wyllt [994]
Arthur

Lladd Ysgithrwyn Pen Beidd (The Slaying of Ysgithrwyn Chief of Boars) [1007-1022]

Arthur
Mabon fab Mellt [1007-1008]
Caw o Brydyn [1016]

Menw fab Teirgwaedd yn rhith aderyn (Menw fab Teirgwaedd in Bird's Form) [1023-1035]

Menw

Pair Diwrnach Wyddel (The cauldron of Diwrnach Wyddel) [1036-1056]

Diwrnach Wyddel [1037]
Arthur and his men
Bedwyr

Hela'r Twrch Trwyth (Hunting the Twrch Trwyth) [1057-1165]

Arthur and his men
Twrch Trwyth [1067]
Gwrhryr
Grugyn Gwrych Ereint [1083]
Llwydawg Gofynniat [1137]
Twrch Llawin [1147]
Gwys [1148]

Gyrru'r Twrch Trwyth i'r môr o Gernyw (The Twrch Trwyth is driven into the sea) [1166-1204]

Twrch Trwyth
Arthur
Osla Gyllellfawr [1180-1181]
Cacamwri [1181]
Mabon fab Modron
Cyledyr Wyllt

Y Gwiddonod (The Very Black Witch) [1205-1229]

Arthur

Gwyn ap Nudd

Gwythyr fab Greidawl

Cacamwri

Yr Anturiaethau drosodd: Priodas Culhwch ac Olwen (Ysbaddaden's Death:
Culhwch marries Olwen) [1230-1246]

Caw o Brydyn

Culhwch

Ysbaddaden

Goreu fab Custennin